A blueprint for cycling in Camden

FM Conway worked with the London Borough of Camden on a UK first to create attractive, safe cycle lanes through innovative 'light segregation'

In the London Borough of Camden, FM Conway has implemented an innovative new 'light segregation' system, using street furniture to shape cycle lanes on Royal College Street, as part of a £xx project that was completed this August.

The project replaces former cycling infrastructure and junction design, and is the first time the technique has been used for creating cycle lanes in the UK.

A break from convention

Royal College Street previously had just one cycle lane for both north and southbound cyclists, which was segregated from traffic by a kerb. This allowed for a wider carriageway, which consequently had a high level of speeding from motorists – with an average vehicle travelling at 29.8 mph, well in excess of the 20 mph limit.

The new format has been designed to reverse this trend, using street furniture to provide two-metre wide cycle lanes for both north and southbound cyclists, as well as more considered carriageway and junction design to better control vehicle movements. As well as the planters and 'armadillo' road bumps that separate cyclists from the main carriageway, parking bays have also been relocated to provide a form of protection for cyclists and leave space at the side of the road for the cycle lanes – and bus stops and pedestrian crossings have been relocated accordingly. John Futcher, team manager for public realm and planning at the London Borough of Camden, explains:

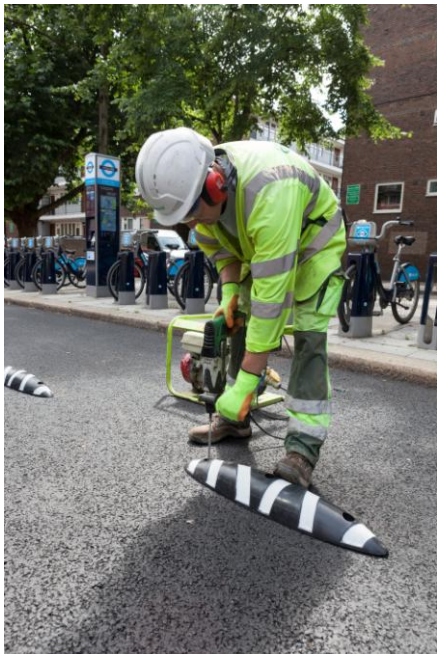
"We wanted to make it safer and more attractive for people to cycle. So when we reviewed the road design for Royal College

Street, we wanted to see if we could adapt more conventional designs into something more innovative, something better. We've really achieved that at Royal College Street and the response has been fantastic."

"It has been even quicker to implement than we had envisaged. It could easily take three months to install a conventional cycle lane using a kerb, but you could theoretically do the same distance in as little as three weeks using light segregation. That has huge cost saving implications that could amount to as much as 80 per cent."

Collaborative working

A major challenge for the scheme was to balance the works with a high number of utility projects being carried out at the same time. Niall Lowney, senior contracts manager for FM Conway, oversaw the works:



"We communicated effectively with a number of stakeholders to ensure the plans could be carried out with as little impact as possible. We worked very closely with Thames Water to coordinate our work schedule, and consulted residents to minimise disruption. Another group was the local cyclists here. We carefully prepared our works so they could use the route as much as possible throughout the project.

"We can be incredibly proud of the scheme. We've been working in the borough since 2009, and that relationship was crucial for planning, getting involved early, and delivering a fantastic end result for people in Camden."

A blueprint for cycling

"We fully believe this could be a blueprint for other parts of London" continues John Futcher. "Provided the streets are wide enough, light segregation is fast and cost-effective to install, and provides safe conditions for everyone wanting to use the road.

"We've had terrific support from our senior management and political leadership to complete this scheme – and that has been essential. It was also great to see FM Conway getting enthusiastic about the works. They were committed, flexible, and the workers took a genuine interest in our vision for project."