



21/2509/MRES | Reserved matters application for layout, appearance and landscaping for the main local route through the town centre (Tillhouse Road), the link road to the B3174 (Court Royal) and Crannaford Lane and drainage works on land adjacent to Tillhouse Road.

21st November 2021

By Email to: planningcranbrook@eastdevon.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Exeter Cycling Campaign would like to **object** to the current layout plan for Tillhouse Road in Cranbrook. This important road passing through Cranbrook's future town centre has been designed around the needs of private motor car users at the expense of pedestrians and people who cycle. This despite the Design and Access statement proclaiming that:

2.4 The design of Tillhouse Road as it passes through the town centre seeks to ensure that a range of uses including retail, commercial, social, civic and residential can all be accessed efficiently and by all modes of transport, seeking to reduce trips by the private car.

As a new town Cranbrook has benefitted from the existence of a primary access route / bypass, in the form of London Road, from its inception. It should therefore be possible, as well as desirable, to minimise through traffic on this town centre route, making a more welcoming civic and retail space.

In the sections that follow, elements of this design of Tillhouse Road will be considered against the stated aim to reduce private car trips.

Shared walking and cycling paths

The cross-section diagram included in this application indicates that the pavement along Tillhouse Road, including the high street section, will be shared between pedestrians and cyclists. This does not adhere to the LTN 1/20 (Local Transport Note) standards published by the Department for Transport which state (1.6.1):

1.6.1 (2): Shared use routes in streets with high pedestrian or cyclist flows should not be used. Instead, in these sorts of spaces distinct tracks for cyclists should be made, using sloping, pedestrian-friendly kerbs and / or different surfacing.

A town centre and high street should expect to see large numbers of pedestrians. This should be even more the case given the applicants stated aim to reduce trips by private cars. As such

LTN 1/20 indicates that a segregated cycle path, at the very least along the busiest section of Tillhouse Road between Court Royal and Cranford Lane, should be provided. However, this may not be the best approach for Cranbrook's town centre.

Preferably, and with the need for less infrastructure, Tillhouse Road in the town centre should be made much less car centric, creating a space in which all users have shared and equal priority. Purely for illustration, Figure 1 shows a street of this type. This type of approach is hinted at in the Design and Access statement:

3.5 ... It was also agreed that this stretch of carriageway would be raised and dressed thereby physically and visually alerting people to the town centre location.

However the design for Cranbrook does not go as far as to remove the priority of motor vehicles, which would be a welcome step to create a safer, cleaner, and quieter town centre that encourages active transport, and deters cars using the route as a cut through.



Figure 1: Friedrichstraße, Bonn, Germany, Credit: Tighe Lanning.

A successful high street should expect to have cafes and restaurants that spill onto the pavement, creating a vibrant atmosphere. This desirable prospect is however in conflict with the presence of a busy road edged with shared use paths. Chairs and tables will further narrow the space available for pedestrians and cyclists on these pavements who are constrained by the road, whilst traffic makes the area less pleasant to spend time in. This again can be mitigated by designing a slower, and more generally shared space for all users in the high street section of Tillhouse Road.

Along much of Tillhouse Road and along Court Royal the shared pavements are repeatedly narrowed to provide roadside parking bays. This despite around one third of the town centre area to be developed allocated to car parks. These parking bays narrow the shared pavement,

leading to conflict between users, with opening car doors further intruding into the space. These parking bays should be removed along the length of the roads. They reduce visibility between road and pavement users, whilst also creating an unattractive roadside.

High street crossing

The Design and Access statement includes the following:

To facilitate and improve pedestrian accessibility between the northern and southern sides of the High Street section of Tillhouse Road, where shops and other commercial, civic and retail uses are expected to be located, it was agreed that a signalised crossing point should be provided to focus pedestrian crossing where possible to one location and facilitate safe crossing for all.

Unfortunately this approach once again prioritises the movements of motor vehicles over those of pedestrians, who are to be funneled along the street to a single narrow point where they may safely cross. There is an opportunity when first designing this town centre to remove the need for crossings of this sort by designing a space that forces drivers to travel slowly and yield to other users of the space, whilst not prohibiting them entirely (see Figure 1).

Junctions

There are 10 junctions covered by this application area, marked in Figure 2. With the exception of a proposed zebra crossing at the junction of Crannaford Lane and Tillhouse Road (circled in pink), at each junction cars have apparent priority over pedestrians or cyclists using the shared pavements who wish to cross. Updates to the highway code are pivoting towards providing pedestrians and cyclists with priority when crossing junctions, but infrastructure needs to make this priority clear.

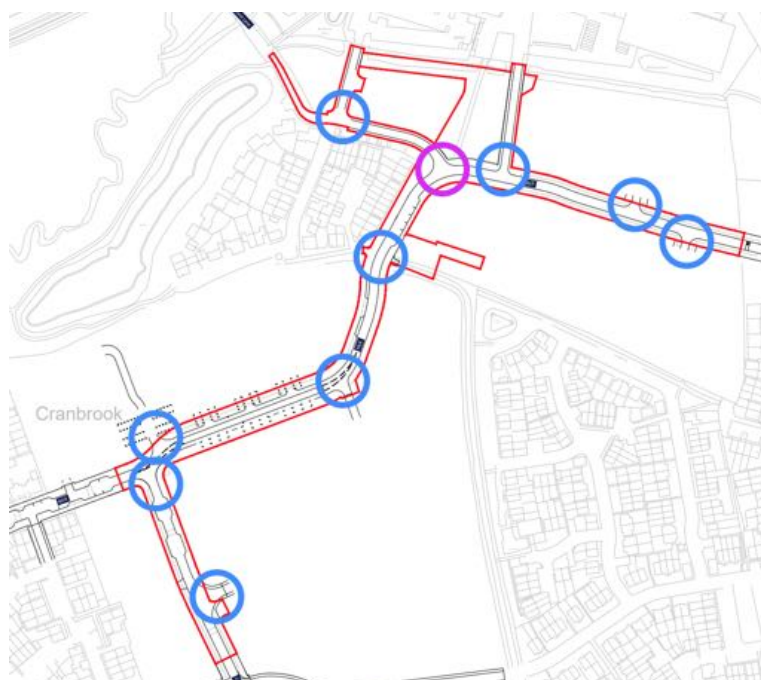


Figure 2: Junctions in the area covered by this application.

Section 1.1 of LTN 1/20 lays out core principles for planning cycling infrastructure and includes the example shown in Figure 3. This in particular refers to segregated cycling infrastructure, which is not provided along Tillhouse Road as planned, but illustrates the issue of providing stop-start shared routes that are broken up by junctions at which cars have priority. Again, to achieve the applicant's stated ambition of reducing private car trips, the provision for pedestrians and cyclists should have priority over the carriageway that largely serves private cars.



DON'T This track requires cyclists to give way at each side road. Routes involving extra distance or lots of stopping and starting will result in some cyclists choosing to ride on the main carriageway instead because it is faster and more direct, even if less safe.

Figure 3: Example of bad practice from LTN 1/20

Furthermore some of the junctions have excessively large kerb radii, allowing cars to make turns at higher speed than is necessary in a low speed town centre environment. This is notable at the Crannaford Way junction where a crossing is planned, and at the entrance to the Morrison's car park. Pedestrians and cyclists crossing these junctions must contend with higher speed car movements that should be mitigated by making the corners tighter, and thus forcing drivers to manoeuvre more slowly.

If the junction crossings in general are not reprioritised in favour of pedestrians and cyclists, then as a minimum the zebra crossing over Crannaford Lane needs to be made into a parallel crossing (one that legally allows for bicycles to cross as well). Furthermore, it needs to connect to a shared use path on the eastern side of Crannaford Lane. In the current design the crossing is set back from the junction in such a way that the pavement on the eastern side is too narrow to be shared use (visible in the plan view in Figure 4). This despite the wide shared use path along Tillhouse Road either side of this point. Without widening the pavement on the eastern side of Crannaford Lane this will be a very significant pinch point, especially given its use by lots of children to reach the school.

Planting

Whilst not wishing to discourage the inclusion of additional planting, some thought is required as to how the planting affects the visibility of those using the pavement to those driving in cars. In the example shown in Figure 4, cars approaching the left turn into Crannaford Road along Tillhouse Road, have their view of the west end of the zebra crossing obscured by a tree. Given the current large kerb radii at this junction (which should be reduced, as discussed previously), it is not designed to be particularly slow. As such a car driver may approach the crossing at relatively high speed and not see someone attempting to cross. The applicants should ensure they have considered the impact of planting on the mutual visibility of all users of the space.



Figure 4: Planting at the corner of Tillhouse Road and Crannaford Way, along with an image showing the proposed type of tree on the corner potentially obscuring the crossing.

Summary

The proposed design cannot achieve its stated objective of *seeking to reduce trips by the private car*. It prioritises car movements at almost all points where car users and non-car users interact, and takes space from pedestrians and cyclists to provide parking. To plan a town centre that is a vibrant, safe, and welcoming place for all the applicants need to consider:

- Reweighting the priority of movement along Tillhouse Road adjoining the town centre in favour of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists at all the junctions covered by this application
- Removing roadside parking bays that take space from pedestrians and cyclists.

We hope that these comments help ensure that Cranbrook develops a successful town centre that is welcoming to all and which is fit for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Ayliffe

for and on behalf of:

EXETER CYCLING CAMPAIGN