
Proposal for a New Sydney Place, Bath Low Traffic Neighbourhood and Residents Parking Scheme

Contents

Introduction	2
1 B&NES' vision and a New Sydney Place LTN	4
 New Sydney Place LTN Proposal as per B&NES LTN <i>Pro Forma</i>	
2 Existing problems and difficulties	7
3 Perceived causes of problems	11
4 Geographical area affected by the issue	21
5 Key amenities within the geographical area	23
6 Scale/severity of the problem	28
7 Types of outcomes/benefits/opportunities	29
8 Local level of support for this request	30
Conclusion	32
Annexes	34

Introduction

This proposal is made in response to the B&NES Climate Emergency Declaration and the Council's plans to create Liveable Neighbourhoods. Specifically, the proposal focuses on the development of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), and includes residents parking arrangements and electric vehicle (EV) charging facilities.

We have chosen to use the original name of "New Sydney Place" (Low Traffic Neighbourhood) instead of the current name, "Sydney Place," to differentiate it from the other (older) Sydney Place on the A36, built in 1800.

"New Sydney Place" was the original name given to the terrace at its inception in 1808, described by Historic England as "amongst Bath's most prestigious late Georgian developments" (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1395300>) with its end-of-terrace houses (Numbers 93 and 103) occupied by Queen Charlotte and her son, the Duke of Clarence—later King William IV—respectively. (New) Sydney Place was the last grand Georgian terrace to be built in Bath, and is Bath's only complete Grade I listed Georgian terrace to survive unaltered. The two Sydney Places were the only completed terraces out of six that were designed to frame Sydney Gardens and Sydney House (now the Holburne Museum)—both significant features of this location, then and now.

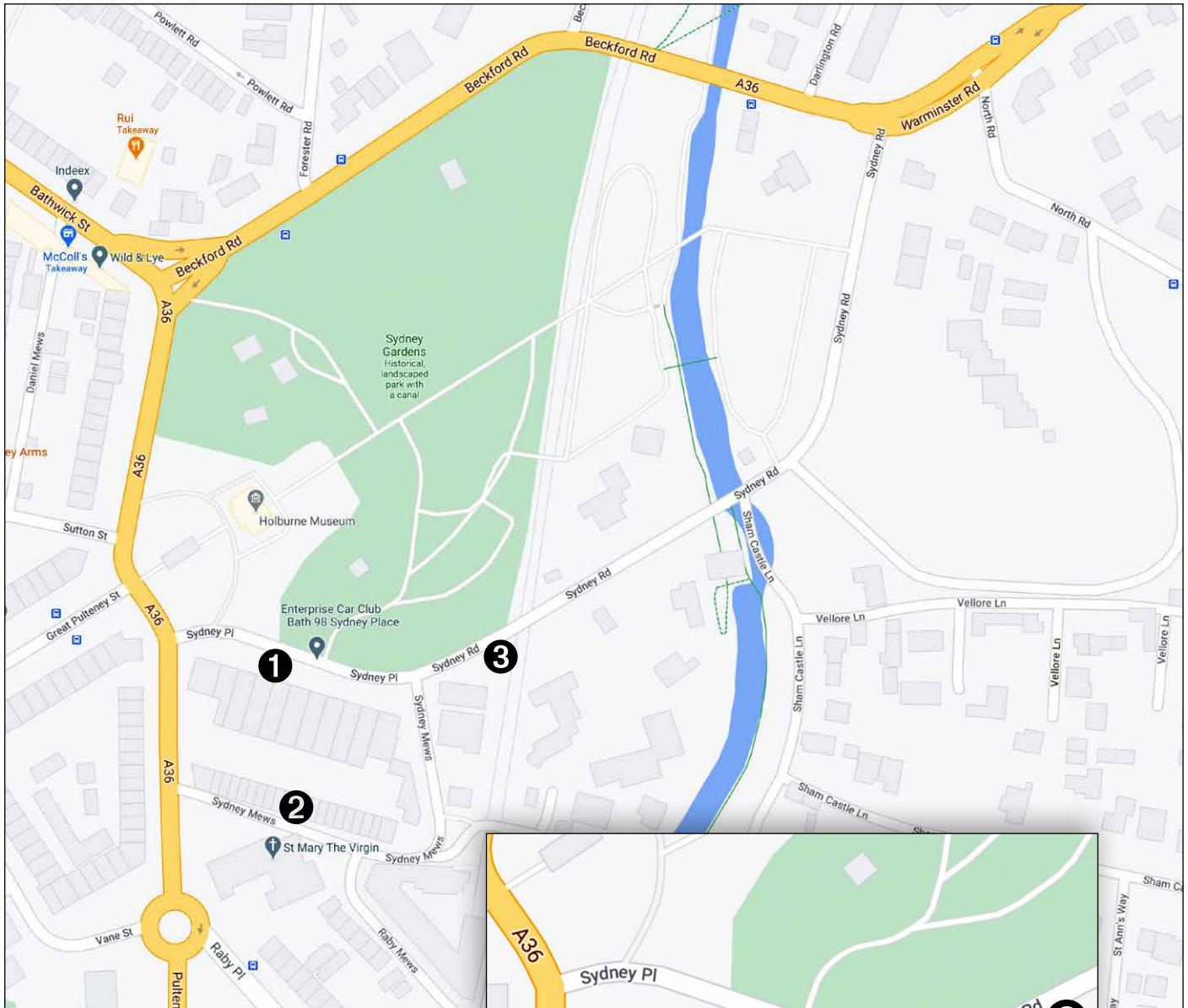
The map on page 3 includes the location of (New) Sydney Place, and the surrounding roads and streets.

The (New) Sydney Place 'catchment' includes 11 terraced houses, the Orangery (93A Sydney Place), and eight apartments and one detached cottage within Sydney Lawn. Of the 11 terraced houses, five are owned as single whole houses, whilst the rest are divided into leasehold apartments. In total there are between 51 and 53 separate households, including one HMO apartment.

Residents in our LTN community include single people, couples, families with children, and students. The population is highly diverse, with above average elderly and infirm, and a smaller number of EU and BAME residents.

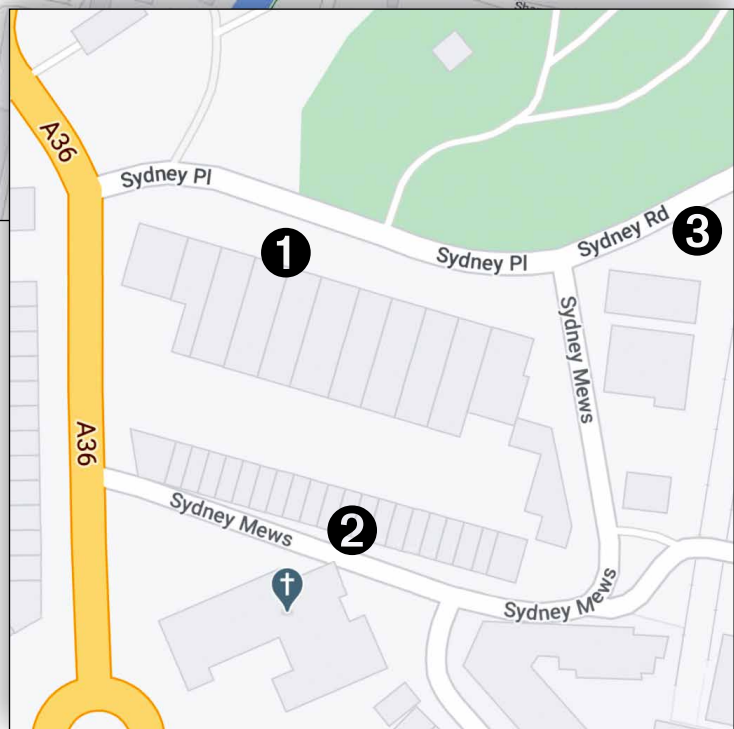
The Sydney Place Action Group has spearheaded this proposal, which has the full support of the (New) Sydney Place local community, and the overarching Pulteney Estate Residents Association (PERA).

Map 1: (New) Sydney Place, Sydney Road and environs



- ❶ (New) Sydney Place
- ❷ Sydney Mews
- ❸ Sydney Road

From Google Maps – © 2021 Google



1 B&NES' vision and a New Sydney Place LTN

1.1 *"B&NES Council recognize the importance of responding to the Climate Emergency, which demands a fundamental step-change in methods of travel by residents, visitors and people who work in B&NES. It requires a major shift to public transport, walking and cycling in order to reduce transport emissions."* (B&NES LTN Strategy, Final Draft, 2020: p 001: iii)

(<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/FINAL%20DRAFT%20LTN%20Strategy.pdf>)

As a first step towards reversing the current car-dominated city space, and in response to B&NES declaration of a Climate Emergency, we have considered how our proposals might align with B&NES vision and strategic aims (ibid., p 001: iii) to:

- Improve air quality and respond to the climate emergency
- Improve the public realm and quality of life—creating better places for residents, businesses and visitors as well as sympathetically accommodating emerging EV infrastructure requirements
- Enable more local trips by active modes of travel and public transport through providing easy, safe and comfortable routes within neighbourhoods in line with the public health requirements
- Reduce the impact of rat-running vehicles along unsuitable residential roads, to support prosperity and improve community connectivity, whilst safeguarding access for residents and the needs of mobility-impaired people

1.2 B&NES describes the principles of an LTN as focusing on:

"... reducing the dominance of traffic to deliver attractive, healthy, accessible and safe neighbourhoods for people. This generates opportunities in residential areas to improve conditions for walking and cycling, as well as access to public transport and community spaces." (ibid., p 003)

1.3 Specifically, the proposed New Sydney Place LTN meets the key principles set out in B&NES LTN Strategy Document, Final Draft, (2020: p 001; iv), as follows:

1.3.1 "Size: *low traffic neighbourhoods should ideally include a group of residential streets, bordered by a main road (those used by LGVs, HGVs, buses and through traffic), which is 'walkable within 15 mins (approximately 1 km).'*"

Response: (New) Sydney Place is at the lower end of Sydney Road. It borders onto the main A36 Darlington Street and (old) Sydney Place. Sydney Mews, a small parallel street of single car width, will benefit from a New Sydney Place LTN by the removal of another layer of rat-running. A level walk to the city centre takes 10 minutes.

1.3.2 “Location: *low traffic neighbourhoods should be in close proximity to key amenities and services, especially key transport interchanges.”*

Response: Between (New) Sydney Place and the A36 Beckford Road are Sydney Gardens and the Holburne Museum—two major tourist attractions and heritage assets. Close by are shops on Bathwick Street and increasingly popular cafés at the Holburne Museum and on Bathwick Hill, with shops nearby. The famous Kennet and Avon Canal—a walker’s paradise—runs under Sydney Road and is easily accessible for cyclists and pedestrians. Local bus stops are currently in Great Pulteney Street and at the foot of Bathwick Hill. The train and bus stations are a 15-minute walk away.

1.3.3 “Infrastructure: *a range of infrastructure can be used to support the implementation of low traffic neighbourhoods, which could include modal filters, active mode development and public realm improvements.”*

Response: By removing traffic and by introducing modal filters, ample space can be found for safe walking and cycling. For example, children can travel safely to and from local schools and pedestrians can have safe access to local amenities and attractions, as well as the city centre, the canal and Sydney Gardens. Social distancing during the Covid pandemic will be possible and, in the case of the elderly and infirm, there will be the time and space to cross the road safely.

Without through-traffic, cyclists will have the safe conditions to cycle into and out of the city. A bicycle and scooter parking area is already in place in front of the Holburne Museum entrance, and facilities could be enlarged to include a cycle shed or similar (subject to the appropriate consents).

Visitors’ parking currently runs in front of Sydney Gardens, opposite (New) Sydney Place. If this facility were replaced with residents’ parking, which is currently very inadequate, more space could also be made for pedestrians by moving the parking area away from the existing narrow pavement. There would also be space for the installation of EV charging facilities, subject to the advice of B&NES Council officers, in various locations, and for the retention of the current car club facility – an important feature in a LTN that also encourages the reduction of car ownership.

Access down Sydney Road would be restricted thorough a modal filter, except for emergency vehicles and subject to B&NES expert advice. Access for taxis, deliveries, B&NES council services and residents parking would be from the A36 at the junction with Darlington Street and ‘old’ Sydney Place. The proposed plan on Map 5 would allow ample space for turning at the top end of the (New) Sydney Place terrace, and a second turning area in front of a modal filter at the end of the terrace running south towards Sydney Mews.

1.3.4 “Community involvement/engagement: *active community engagement should be embedded from the start of the process, through to co-designing elements and continue through the active feedback and monitoring stages.”*

Response: We have involved our local community in the planning and designing of our proposal since early 2020. Methods include:

- Several live and virtual Sydney Place Action Group meetings
- Wider community communication through emails, flyers, small meetings and general information sharing
- Discussions with PERA committee members regarding the (New) Sydney Place and other PERA proposals
- Communications with residents of Sydney Mews and Sydney Lawn
- Communications with the Sydney Gardens Committee
- Meetings with Bathwick Councillors Manda Rigby and Yuktेशwar Kumar

1.4 We have collated evidence that underpins and support the rationale for our proposal through:

- B&NES Liveable Streets Commonplace (B&NES LSC) website (<https://bathnesliveablestreets.commonplace.is>), where in excess of 100 comments and agreements provide proof of the strength of feeling regarding the problems in our area, and the support for an LTN
- Past and current documentation that highlights the necessity for change in our area
- Snap observations at random times by residents over a period of one week, and the collection of evidence with cameras or through roadside documentation

New Sydney Place LTN Proposal as per B&NES LTN *Pro forma*

2 Existing problems and difficulties

There are ongoing and well-documented difficulties for those who live in and/or move around (New) Sydney Place. Those affected include all residents, pre-school and school-age children, the elderly and fragile, the disabled and numerous visitors to the Holburne Museum, Sydney Gardens and popular canal walks in our part of Bath.

2.1.2 B&NES 2000–2003 Traffic Consultation

Problems were initially acknowledged in 2000 through a 3-year public consultation on a “Sydney Gardens Traffic Scheme” (SGTS) in which Sir Elgar Jenkins—B&NES Executive Member for Transport and Highways—finally confirmed in 2003:

“The speed and traffic volume on Sydney Road/Sydney Place (East) or New Sydney Place is considered to be unacceptable for the environment in this area. Pedestrian movement is impeded greatly by the impact of traffic. Measures to reduce this impact will be of clear benefit to both residents and pedestrians ... and a speed box is to be installed to help reduce vehicle speeds.” (Annex 1: B&NES SGTS, 2003: 3.3)

The implementation of a 7.5 tonne weight limit on Sydney Road / (New) Sydney Place, the widening of footpaths and the locating of speed boxes were declared a priority. Specifically the report stated:

“This section of road is still classified as the A36 primary route but by imposing such a restriction the road should be formally de-classified and an application to do so needs to be made to the Department for Transport. 3.5: Facilities for pedestrians on Sydney Road / Sydney Place East are lacking, particularly across the railway bridge and at the entrance to the park. Therefore proposals for widening the footway are included.” (ibid., 3.4)

2.1.3 Recommendations for an LTN in 2003

In many respects, the proposals made in 2003 for Sydney Road, and for (New) Sydney Place in particular, were a forerunner of an LTN. The intention then was to create a low-traffic, residential neighbourhood, where people and not vehicles were the priority. In 2000, the causes and impacts of climate change were less well known and publicized. Cars were not removed but discouraged. Twenty years later we have a climate emergency; cars will be removed from LTNs and pedestrians and cyclists will be prioritized.

2.1.4 Ongoing problems into 2020

The excerpts from the 2003 consultation still apply to our situation today in 2020. Only the 7.5 tonne weight-limit signage has been installed but enforcement is absent. The lack of follow-through of the 2003 directive has resulted in serious ongoing problems.

Individuals and groups have made numerous complaints to B&NES Council regarding the increase in the volume and speed of traffic, the frequent violation of the weight limit, and the negative impact on the health and safety of residents, children, and the mobility-impaired as well as on our heritage assets. Some years ago a speed-monitoring device was installed at the top of Sydney Road—but this has not worked for most of the time since it was installed. About seven years ago, 20 mph signs were erected, but speed enforcement has been completely lacking. Accidents and events have been recorded that have damaged Grade 1, first-rate world heritage properties, and threaten to occur again.

One resident reminds us:

“This road is like a racetrack. Since the sign was broken, and more than once in recent years, a vehicle (a car and an HGV on the two occasions I know about) speeding downhill around the bend by the Sydney Mews junction, went out of control, unable to make the sharp bend into Sydney Place, and crashed into the south side of Sydney Place, on at least one occasion crashing through the railings of a Grade 1 property.” (B&NES LSC website, 2020) See Figures 1a and 1b.



Figures 1a and 1b

Substantial evidence of the negative effects of excessive volumes of polluting traffic on our area influenced B&NES Council to include us (Bathwick) in Bath’s CAZ. Recommendations in our CAZ submission included the issues highlighted in this document that still remain unresolved, and will not be addressed solely through the CAZ implementation as it excludes cars. In the meantime, we continue to be alarmed by the performance of traffic in front of our terrace. (Some of us have signed up for Speed Watch—but that alone is not enough and has not taken place due to lockdown).

The first Covid 19 lockdown reminded us all how Bath could ‘be’. Specifically, (New) Sydney Place became seamlessly integrated with Sydney Gardens (as was the original intention when the terrace was built in 1808), and access to the Kennet and Avon Canal and to the rest of the city was safe and easy.

Becoming an LTN was an obvious and logical progression, and promised to sustain this change. But, during the easing of restrictions, old habits returned too quickly and with a vengeance. We were back in the danger zone—no birdsong, no safe space, no safe movement. Our argument to be included in Bath's CAZ was successfully won—and yet without the development of an LTN, we will be reduced to the level of risk to health and well-being that was considered unacceptable. Furthermore, considerable damage to the heritage assets that are our jewels in Bath's crown—internationally acknowledged as worthy of special protection—will be unavoidable.

Our key concern is that, due to the violation of measures to protect our area, the residential Sydney Road is taking excessive amounts of traffic, whilst the A36, the designated route for all traffic, is often relatively under-used.

A particular case in 2012 clarifies a key point that is relevant to our argument. B&NES does have the power to ensure the safety of its residents without removing the effectiveness of the Primary Route Network (PRN) that lies outside Bath and is dependent on the smooth flow of traffic within it for its viability.

To illustrate the point: an appeal in 2012 by the Highways Agency and Wiltshire and Somerset Councils against B&NES' attempt to re-route traffic exceeding 18 tonnes to reduce pressure on the A36 was successful because, although B&NES had control of a three-mile section of the A36/A4 in Bath, it was unable to meet its responsibility to ensure the viability of the PRN and the Strategic Route Network (SRN). The response to the appeal stated:

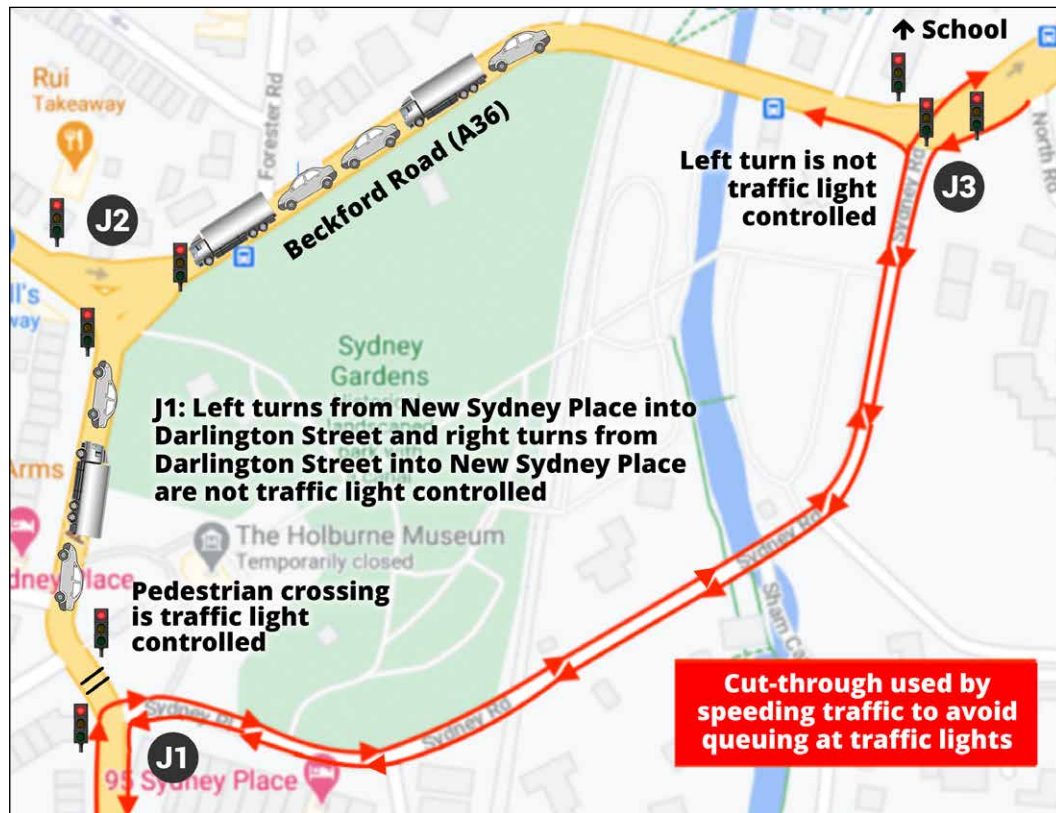
“No attempt had been made to find an alternative route for freight traffic. The PRN and SRN are both compromised...” (See Annex 2: Dept. for Transport letter to B&NES, 2012: p 2)

The letter continued:

“B&NES is welcome to use its newly-acquired powers to adjust the PRN in its area to remove traffic from the London Road (in this case)—provided that proper procedures are followed and all types of traffic continue to have a viable route through Bath.” (ibid., p 2)

Reflecting on our proposal to be an LTN, the main A36 Beckford Road is not just an option but it is already the main designated and only viable route. (New) Sydney Place, and its geographical surroundings can and should be traffic free (other than for residents' parking and emergency or delivery vehicle access) as B&NES develops its vision for a residents-first healthy city.

Map 3: Sydney Road and (New) Sydney Place—details of avoidance route



From Google Maps – © 2021 Google

3. Perceived causes of problems

3.1 Rat-running and overuse of a residential road (see Map 3)

Significant and escalating overuse of Sydney Road is an everyday and all-day occurrence. Observations and experience of the impacts include:

- Vehicles speeding down Sydney Road, well in excess of the speed limit, to avoid the main A36 and the traffic lights at the junction with Bathwick Street
- Queues developing during rush hour outside (New) Sydney Place and along Sydney Mews even when the main A36 is quiet (Figure 2). Numbers of cars double at that time (Annex 8)



Figure 2

- Cars accelerating at speed up Sydney Road after queuing along Darlington Street, creating significant problems for pedestrians crossing the road from (New) Sydney Place to the Holburne Museum, and vice versa, as cars and lorries cut the corner (Figures 3, 4 and 5)



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

- Local people relying on the car for short runs instead of walking or cycling. For example, cars have been observed with one driver and one or two children, taking a short cut to and from local schools
- Underuse of public transport and school buses

A quote from B&NES LSC website, 2020, sums up the problem for residents:

“During the time that I have lived here (20 years) and with decisions made to reduce, slow and restrict traffic, nothing has been done to enforce this. It is not safe to cycle, walk or cross ... Watching people struggle every day or just avoid being hit by a speeding vehicle is distressing. We do not need rat running, through traffic ... Things have to change.”

3.2 Non-compliance with the 20 mph limit

Perceived causes:

- 20 mph speed signs are small and too limited in number
- No speed enforcement along Sydney Road, in spite of the installation of one defunct recorder, on one side of the road
- Road camber, incline and a sweeping bend encourage racing up and down Sydney Road past (New) Sydney Place
- More vehicles on the road impact on more people who take exercise and recreation in the park
- Drivers appear to have no regard for the safety of numerous pedestrians and cyclists

Comments on B&NES 2020 LNC website express concerns:

“Sydney Road has too many cars going over the speed. The pavements are too narrow for social distancing, meaning people need to step into the road.” and “Cars speed down Sydney Road so it is very hard for older people to cross. They ignore the 20 mph signs which are very hard to see anyway.”

3.3 Non-compliance with the 7.5 weight limit—illegal HGVs and coaches

Perceived causes:

- Small and inadequate 7.5 weight limit signs
- Two signs—one obscured, and the other positioned too late on Warminster Road when approaching the city, and at too short notice at the Darlington Street junction with (New) Sydney Place when travelling out of the city
- No weight limit enforcement
- Avoidance of the main A36 along Beckford Road: Lorries travel along (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Road to avoid the traffic lights, especially outside rush hour times when they are less likely to be held up or caught breaking the law (Figures 6 and 7)



Figure 6



Figure 7

- We understand from B&NES officers that coaches are included in the 7.5-tonne weight restriction except for the purpose of picking up or discharging passengers. Numerous coaches divert along (New) Sydney Place. Occasionally, when they do drop off passengers outside the Museum or in front of (New) Sydney Place, they block visibility and endanger lives (Figure 8)



Figure 8

Residents wrote on B&NES 2020 LSC website, 2020: “HGVs and tour buses exceeding 7.5 tonne weight limit and using this as a rat run” and “Large lorries seem to be back now.”

Another wrote: “During lockdown, the speeding has got worse, though volumes are lower. Likewise, the 7.5 tonne weight limit is *never* enforced. Before lockdown, Sydney Road was regularly used by banned overweight vehicles (HGVs and banned coaches) to avoid waiting at Bathwick St lights. The weight limit was brought in to protect the fragile Grade I structures, one of which in Sydney Place was recently severely damaged by vibration and impact damage from illegal HGVs and illegal coaches, according to the B&NES engineer.”

3.4 Increase in numbers of vehicles travelling past (New) Sydney Place

Perceived causes:

- Inappropriate use of Sydney Road instead of the A36
- Lack of alternative travel options—for example, small buses
- Lack of Park and Ride facilities to the south of Bath (Warminster Road)
- Lack of cycle lanes for safe cycling
- Narrow pavements that reduce walking as an option
- Habitual use of the car instead of walking or cycling

The volume of cars and car ownership has increased significantly over time, as predicted in the 2003 SGTS Report. Years later, in 2014, and at the request of residents, traffic monitoring was carried out in front of (New) Sydney Place by B&NES Traffic Management Team. Results identified a significant increase in vehicle numbers, in what Peter Bailey (Senior Engineer) described as an intended “quiet residential area.” (See Annex 3: email of 27.08.2014)

(New) Sydney Place is a designated residential area. This is confirmed in B&NES own report: “The area is highly residential with recreational facilities and the Holburne Museum. There is considerable amount of pedestrian activity in that area” (2003, SGTSR).

Residents captured evidence of the excessive amount of traffic travelling along our residential road through ‘snap’ observations made at random times during one week in October 2020 (Annex 8). Data showed that numbers of vehicles travelling past (New) Sydney Place ranged from 516 to 670 per hour (average 593) during rush hour/ school-run times. Outside those peak periods, vehicle numbers were consistently over 300 per hour, except for one hour on Thursday. Based on our limited survey, we estimated that between 06.00 hrs. and 19.00 hrs. a shocking total of 4,480 vehicles would travel past (New) Sydney Place in one day. This excluded the eleven hours after 19.00 hrs. and before 06.00 hrs.

To further illustrate our point, and taking B&NES traffic survey of 2018 (see Annex 4), we note that numbers of vehicles along (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Road are again inappropriately excessive. Furthermore, we believe these numbers are on the low side as they are estimates based on the manual count of 2015. Since 2015 numbers along our road have only been estimated. However, neighbouring trunk roads had manual counts in 2016, 2015 and 2018 that were more up to date than in our neighbourhood.

The survey then showed that Sydney Road and therefore (New) Sydney Place had just more than half the number of cars, taxis and light goods vehicles compared to those on the main trunk route in 2018. A scandalous total of 3,900 vehicles per day (estimated) travelled along our residential road. Today, lorries on Sydney Road significantly exceed the numbers represented in the survey, as we revealed in our local count above.

The reduction of traffic from 18,284 vehicles per day along Pulteney Road to 11,592 along (old) Sydney Place begs the question—where does the traffic go? Whilst recognizing that some might turn off up Bathwick Hill, the rest is exactly what we experience ‘pushing’ up and down Sydney Road every day—disproportionately large numbers of vehicles.

B&NES plan for LTNs is to “reduce the dominance of traffic to deliver attractive, healthy, accessible and safe neighbourhoods for people.” Bath could become the first ‘liveable’ city that, although intersected by two main trunk routes, sends the message that walking and cycling are the dominant modes of travel. Essential traffic can travel slowly through a single, controlled and speed-restricted route. In this case it would be the main A36—not a side road that was designated by B&NES as a quiet residential street 17 years ago.

We know that Sydney Road is neither the PNR nor the SNR. A comment on B&NES LNC website, 2020, confirms our view:

“Decisions were taken in 2003 to make this a low traffic, residential area. There are now high levels of speeding traffic that exceed the 20 mph limit, and 7.5 tonne weight limits are being broken. It is not safe to cycle on either side, neither [will it be] possible to cycle through Sydney Gardens. The main access to Sydney Gardens is on Sydney Road where the pavement is narrow, and it is not safe to self distance even 1 metre without stepping into the road. Parked cars hide visibility and create a highly dangerous situation.”

3.5 Congestion and pollution

Perceived cause:

- Large numbers of vehicles, especially at peak times, create queues of idling engines, exuding polluting fumes (Figure 9)



Figure 9

We accept that the problem of pollution might reduce after the implementation of B&NES CAZ, but diesel cars are not excluded and they are among the main offenders. Residents complain of coughing and increased asthma and bronchitis, and comment on the black particulates on garden tables (Sydney Place nos.101 and 103). Window cleaners report black specks that cover windows.

Children walking to school and trying to cross the road are vulnerable, as are the elderly and disabled who live here. The outcome of the lengthy UK High Court case in which the coroner found that nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah had died of asthma, with air pollution listed as cause of death, is set to make a major impact on how cities manage and monitor air quality. A neighbour says:

“It is high time that pedestrians and residents were given priority over cars, vans and lorries. The Coronavirus lockdown gave us a taste of what life could be like with less traffic and noise pollution in our area.”(B&NES LSC website, 2020)

3.6 No safe crossings

Perceived causes:

- Lack of implementation of the 2003 SGTS consultation decisions and directives
- Lack of action by B&NES in spite of concerns raised for 20 years

There are no safe crossing points along the whole of Sydney Road and (New) Sydney Place. Pedestrians are at risk as illegal lorries and speeding vehicles fail to give way (Figure 10: photo sequence).



Figure 10 (photo sequence)

Danger is evident when pedestrians and cyclists try to cross between the Holburne Museum and (New) Sydney Place at the junction with Darlington Street. One neighbour says: “Cars use a short cut to avoid traffic lights. [There’s] no safe crossing and vehicles tend to speed.” (ibid.,) and:

“It was at this very corner that a schoolboy was recently knocked off his bike by a speeding vehicle and seriously injured, with all his teeth knocked out. This alarming scene—mixing hundreds of schoolchildren, traffic and pollution—occurs each day at peak time between 4.00 and 4.45 pm, when the school runs overlap with the early rush hour”. (SGRA CAZ Report, 2019).

3.7 Cyclists at risk

Perceived causes:

- No cycle paths
- Speeding traffic
- Illegal lorries
- Narrow pavements—pedestrians on roads
- Too many obstructions overall

Comments from cyclists on B&NES LNC website, 2020, include:

“Speeding rat-runners turning right into Sydney Place eastbound from Darlington Street northbound, endangering pedestrians and cyclists.”

“Lack of safe cycling lanes in this road made dangerous by rat-running cars, vans and coaches, forcing cyclists to go through Sydney Gardens where it is inconvenient for cyclists commuting and hazardous for pedestrians in the Gardens.”

“There’s no safe way to enter and leave the Holburne Museum (and Cafe) by bike, except for using the pedestrian crossing. Could this be made a toucan crossing? This doesn’t resolve the problem of not being able to get from Great Pulteney Street onto the Holburne Museum bike parking though.”

Parents of children at a local school report that showers are in place for cyclists, but the school is reluctant to encourage cycling until there are safe cycling routes (resident of (New) Sydney Place, 2019). The 2003 SGTS Report stated that the preferred route for cyclists was across Sydney Place from Great Pulteney Street, and then through Sydney Gardens. This facility will not exist in the future, so risks will be higher. Once implemented, our LTN proposals will provide a much safer and easier route for cyclists.

3.8 Narrow pavements

Perceived cause:

- Lack of action taken by B&NES in spite of the decision to implement pavement widening in the B&NES (2003) ‘SGTS Final Report’

Ever increasing numbers of residents and visitors frequent the Holburne Museum, Sydney Gardens, (New) Sydney Place, Sydney Lawns Apartments, and the canal. Numbers will increase significantly in the future after the Gardens' restoration is complete. The pavement that runs along the perimeter of Sydney Gardens, with its main entrance opposite the (New) Sydney Place terrace, is very narrow. It is inadequate for people wanting to access Sydney Gardens for recreation and exercise, and social distancing during the pandemic forces people to step out into the road (Figures 11 and 12).



Figure 11



Figure 12

Further problems arise for pedestrians when doors open from parked cars, potentially cutting off access along the pavement. Pedestrians are also unable to cross the road safely due to lack of visibility from parked cars. Drivers cannot see pedestrians trying to cross the street between parked cars (Figures 13 and 14).



Figure 13



Figure 14

3.9 Very limited parking for residents:

Perceived causes:

- One half of the road is for visitors' parking, with a two hour limit
- There are only 10 spaces for residents parking in front of (New) Sydney Place, plus one parking space for the disabled. There are a further 22 car parking spaces to the side
- There are more households than available parking
- Parking in this area attracts residents, visitors and students from the whole of 01 zone who are 'pushed out' of their immediate areas. The 01 parking zone is already Bath's most poorly served zone for residents
- Visitors' and residents' parking spaces are often taken up by shoppers and 'dog-walking' cars
- The latterly expanded Sydney Lawn development (beyond the original planning permission) did not provide for sufficient additional number of car spaces onsite, leading to a dramatic decrease in available car parking in Sydney Mews and (New) Sydney Place once the development was occupied
- People drive to walk their dogs in Sydney Gardens, instead of walking their dogs from their homes
- Visitors' parking is completely monopolized on Bath Rugby match days

3.10 Damage to infrastructures and heritage assets

Perceived causes:

- Reports confirm that recent severe damage to Grade I listed bedrooms and sitting rooms in (New) Sydney Place (with repair costs running into six figures, and taking an apartment out of use for the better part of a year) was caused by impact damage and vibration damage from illegal overweight HGVs and coaches. Due to the unusual height of the vaulted Georgian structures which are situated partially beneath the westbound carriageway, the HDPE ferrules connecting the properties' mains water supply to the water main are situated only a matter of centimetres beneath the road surface. The major damage to the Grade I listed residences affected was traced to a single cracked HDPE ferrule, which according to a B&NES engineer, had been damaged by vehicles operating in excess of the 7.5 tonne weight limit; it is estimated that there are more than 50 of these ferrules supplying (New) Sydney Place, all of which are subject to an equivalent risk from overweight vehicles
- Sydney Road and (New) Sydney Place are totally unsuitable for heavy vehicles, including HGVs and coaches, as B&NES has argued for decades
- Cars travelling too fast can lose control (see Figures 1a and 1b, page 8)
- Illegal lorries and coaches disturb and potentially destroy the fabric of this George III heritage asset of national and international significance, as has been reported by B&NES Council Officers over many years
- Cracking and breaking of the balcony stonework of the centre house due to impact damage and vibration damage from overweight vehicles

4 Geographical area affected by the issue

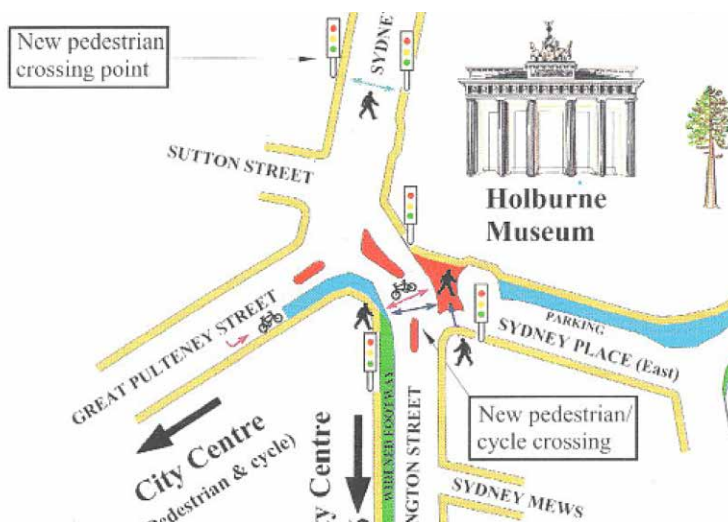
Maps 2 (page 10) and 3 (page 11) show the ways in which traffic operates within the current traffic layout in our location. Movement of traffic is self-evident.

It is important to note here is that the decision in 2003 to create a non-traffic-light-controlled right turn from Darlington Street into (New) Sydney Place had been vehemently opposed from start to finish by the B&NES Council Officers in the Traffic Management Team, because it defeated a number of their principal objects, and they wanted to sign the intersection “No Right Turn” from Darlington Street into (New) Sydney Place.

However, the elected Members at the time, in the end, felt that they had to surrender to the demands of the then all-powerful motorists’ lobby, which insisted that not allowing the right turn was “prejudicial to motorists” because it added extra minutes to their route each day by requiring them to wait in a traffic queue.

Despite the protests of B&NES Officers, the last-minute concession to permit a right turn into (New) Sydney Place from Darlington Street was deemed politically expedient; otherwise the motorists’ lobby would have continued their vocal opposition to the installation of the current pedestrian crossing on the A36 (connecting Gt Pulteney St to the Holburne Museum).

B&NES original proposed design for the intersection before it was altered as a political compromise to permit the pedestrian crossing to be installed, can be seen here, extracted from the original B&NES May 2002 Second-Stage Public Consultation brochure (see Annex 5):



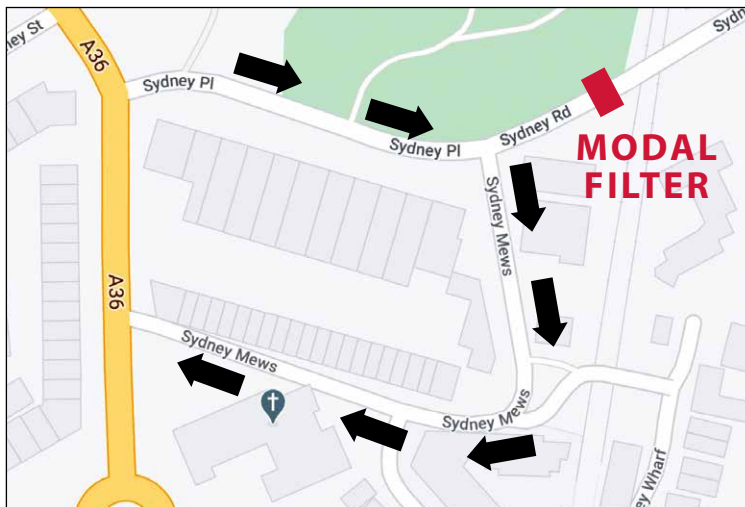
Today, this uncontrolled right turn remains a dangerous intersection for pedestrians, which violates the desired prioritization of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles. There is a main A36 trunk route for vehicles, and we believe that that should be the only option.

The proposed LTN area

Maps 4 and 5 below indicate the proposed LTN area that includes (New) Sydney Place and both sides of Sydney Road that run from the junction with Darlington Street up to Sydney Road railway bridge.

Map 4 shows one possible LTN option. However, this poses a potential threat to residents of Sydney Mews, who risk being subjected to circulating traffic as drivers hunt for parking spaces.

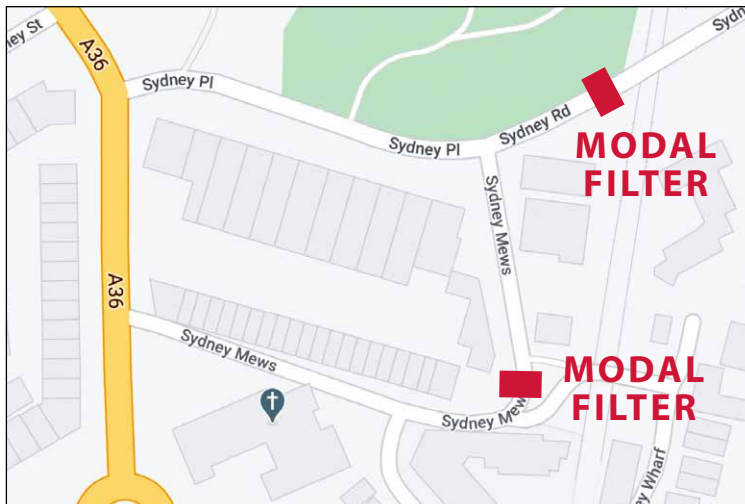
Map 4: Proposal showing gyratory risk



Zone 1 permit holders seeking a parking place

From Google Maps - © 2021 Google

Map 5: Preferred Proposed Scheme with two modal filters, eliminating gyratory risk



Additional modal filter to eliminate Sydney Place ➡ Sydney Mews gyratory risk

Map 5 shows our preferred proposal. It allows access for road traffic coming from “old” Sydney Place and Darlington Street only. The map shows a modal filter on the bridge and another at the corner of (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Mews. There would be ample vehicle turning space at the top end of the terrace, and also in front of the modal filter at the end of the terrace to the south. This would eliminate the gyratory risk described in the previous paragraph.

Within the proposed LTN location, there is room for widening pedestrian access outside Sydney Gardens, and for parking residents' cars on both sides of the road. Cyclists will be able to ride without the threat of through traffic. Cycle and scooter parking is already *in situ*. There is ample space for the appropriate siting of EV charging points, and access for emergency and delivery vehicles. We propose that an improved crossing between (New) Sydney Place and Great Pulteney Street will provide a safer crossing for pedestrians and cyclists—something requested many times on B&NES LSC 2020 website. Advice from B&NES experts will be sought regarding our proposal in terms of its economic viability, and highways policy.

5 Key amenities within the geographical area

Heritage Sites:

(New) Sydney Place: Grade 1 (First rate) royal terrace
Sydney Gardens
The Holburne Museum
The Holburne Café
The Kennet and Avon Canal
I K Brunel cast iron bridge, Sydney Gardens
St Mary's Church and St Mary's Churchyard
Jane Austen's home at 4 (old) Sydney Place
Great Pulteney Street
Edward Street
Vane Street
Laura Place
Johnstone Street
Henrietta Street
Pulteney Bridge

Other public amenities:

The Recreation Ground
Bathwick St Mary's Primary School
King Edward's School, North Road
Shops on Bathwick Hill, including Tesco, a florist's, a café, an interior design shop, canal-boat hire, canal-side café
Shops on Bathwick Street including the Co-op, a drycleaners, an estate agents

Pubs and Hotels:

The Barley Mow
The Pulteney Arms
The Bathwick Boatman Riverside Restaurant
The Bath Spa Hotel and fitness centre
The Bird Hotel, Pulteney Road

No. 15 Great Pulteney, Great Pulteney Street
 The Windsor Townhouse, Great Pulteney Street
 Dukes hotel, Great Pulteney Street
 The Edgar Townhouse, Great Pulteney Street
 Bath Library and Bath Sports & Leisure Centre are a 10-minute walk away

5.1

The proposed LTN will revive and highlight the original intimate relationship between the royal terrace of (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Gardens, which was the express intention of both the architect, John Pinch, and the landowner who commissioned the construction and landscaping, The Viscount Barnard, Earl of Darlington. This architecturally and historically important public realm relationship between Terrace and Gardens, one of the most majestic in Bath, has been gradually eroding year on year, as rat-running motorists (commuters, school runs and long-distance hauliers) have, in increasing numbers, diverted from the A36 in order to dodge the traffic lights and carve a couple of minutes off their journey time, in many cases in violation of weight restrictions and *in the majority of cases well in excess of the speed limit*—unsurprisingly, as the rat-runners are, by definition, motorists in too much of a hurry to wait for the lights to change, and what is more, since speed limits, like weight limits, have never been enforced along this stretch since they were introduced many years ago.

This small but significant geographical location includes assets of the highest heritage value that are also homes to our local community. Residents, visitors, schoolchildren and cyclists move around this area every day. Pevsner's comments on (New) Sydney Place affirms its importance:

"Sydney Place, (formerly New Sydney Place) [is] one of only two completed sides intended to surround Sydney Gardens. It was a speculation of 1804–08 designed by John Pinch the Elder ... The terrace of eleven houses is the most beautiful of Bath's C19 buildings. Completed in one phase, with stone from one quarry, and built storey by storey (unlike Bath practice hitherto, plot by plot), the design, workmanship and uniformity of colour are flawless. [Pinch's ramping of all the horizontals] ... is applied here with much greater elegance than previously, and relates each house to the next; the architecture flows and has continuity, a unity heightened through no emphasis to the central windows. Moreover, each corner has an applied semicircular bay, a device that very successfully turns the corner and, with the bands of horizontal decoration wrapping around like belts, provides a remarkable unity." (2001: pp.187–88)

The heritage significance of (New) Sydney Place was highlighted by B&NES Officers and presented by Don Foster, MP to the Minister for Transport, The Right Honourable The Lord Macdonald of Tradeston, CBE PC at a meeting in Whitehall on 30th April, 2001 and the submission to the B&NES submission to the Minister observed, "The Bath stone façade of the front elevation of (New) Sydney Place, in terms of the quality, colour, and degree of preservation of the stone, is deemed by contemporary experts to be unquestionably Bath's most perfect surviving Georgian facade." (Annex 7, 2.2.3) B&NES Officers, in their submission, went on to quote the eminent architectural historian Walter Ison, who adds that (New) Sydney Place is "a specimen of the

architectural perfection that may be formed of Bath stone. It was all brought from one quarry, and the houses raised gradually together, tier after tier, thereby forming one compact building in which not the least flaw or settlement, or different shades of colour can be seen.” (ibid., 2.2.3)

The set-piece Bathwick Heritage Heart of Bath, comprised of Laura Place, Johnstone St, Henrietta St, Gt Pulteney St, Sunderland Street, the Holburne Museum, (old) Sydney Place and (New) Sydney Place together form the single largest unbroken stretch of Grade I listed architecture in Bath. The pavement in front of (New) Sydney Place was created to be very wide because it was the beginning of the (royal) grand promenade, beginning with Queen Charlotte’s residence at No. 93 (New) Sydney Place, that linked into the correspondingly wider pavement on the south side of Great Pulteney Street.

According to the B&NES Officers in their 2001 submission to the Minister for Transport, “the architectural quality of the Grade I listed terrace, (New) Sydney Place, puts it in the first rank of Britain’s architectural treasures,” adding that “the leading architectural experts concur that it is one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in Bath, on a par with the Royal Crescent and the Circus.” (ibid., 2.2.1) In fact, “internally (New) Sydney Place was built on a grander scale than either, and more of the original architectural details remain.” (ibid., 2.2.2)

(New) Sydney Place is not only Grade I listed but is one of only a handful of Bath’s Grade I terraces officially designated by the Georgian tax authorities as “First Rate” for property tax purposes. (ibid.) (The Royal Crescent and the Circus being designated as “Second Rate,” which apparently was still quite respectable!) The submission stated that all together there remain in Bath a total of only 13 First Rate Grade I Georgian buildings which survive as complete houses (i.e. which have not been either destroyed or broken up into flats). Of these 13 remaining First Rate Grade I masterpieces of Georgian townhouse architecture in all of Bath, 5 are in (New) Sydney Place [making up some forty percent of the terrace]. (ibid., 2.2.2)

(New) Sydney Place is “therefore considered so architecturally sensitive by English Heritage, that they recently declared: ‘[these buildings] of national importance ... are amazingly intact, and for these reasons English Heritage strongly resisted [even] some relatively minor but inappropriate proposals in connection with fire safety”, adding that, needless to say, “any more radical proposals” affecting the buildings adversely “would be unacceptable in principle.” They go on to comment on (New) Sydney Place: “It marked the completion by John Pinch of Baldwin’s design for the Sydney Place development after financial delays in the 1790s, and forms a key part of one of the most impressive of all Neo-classical urban set-pieces in Britain.”

As of 2001, when the evidence was submitted to the Minister for Transport, English Heritage stressed that the ‘architectural integrity’ of these buildings absolutely ‘must be retained’ at all costs and that this imperative placed ‘very obvious constraints’ on any future plans for the area.” (ibid., 2.2.4) In their evidence to the Minister, B&NES Officers conclude their remarks on Sydney Place and on the findings regarding the heritage impact of through traffic by stating categorically that “Escalating sulphuric acid and particulate pollution damage to the unique stone façade of (New) Sydney Place discussed

above, means that the last unspoilt Georgian stone elevation in Bath will be effectively ruined within a few short years if the [Government's] transportation planning neglect is allowed to continue." (ibid., 2.6.7).

It was for these reasons that decisions were made in 2003 to protect (New) Sydney Place from the ravages of traffic, and, nearly two decades later, these same, sensitive heritage considerations may again have influenced B&NES decision to include this neighbourhood in Bath's CAZ.

The same reasoning underpins the New Sydney Place LTN proposal today. To create an LTN at (New) Sydney Place would not only protect, preserve and enhance a vital focal point of Bath's celebrated, magnificent built heritage, from a public realm point of view—saving a majestic locale, featured in numerous major film and television productions from *Persuasion* (1995) and *Vanity Fair* (2004) through *Bridgerton* (Episode 1 of the first of eight planned seasons premiered 25th December 2020), but more importantly would ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians—residents of the area, dog walkers and other local visitors, schoolchildren *en route* to and from school on foot, and tourists alike—those who live and move around here and those who come to enjoy the amenities of the Georgian pleasure gardens and Holburne Museum of Art.

To subject this otherwise quiet and idyllic, historic street to an ever-deteriorating scenario would be tantamount to a conscious decision to ignore, neglect and destroy, and knowingly to sacrifice the safety of pedestrians and cyclists to the "greed for speed" of motorists leaving the A36 merely to save themselves a couple of minutes waiting at lights. As a through road, as opposed to a road for local access and for emergency vehicles, (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Road can serve no other conceivable function, since, for the majority of the vehicles using this road, it goes nowhere that the A36 primary route does not go—nor is this "shortcut" even significantly shorter. But the local community and public realm pay a terrible price.

5.2 Connecting heritage assets and creating a new space for living

5.2.1 Facing (New) Sydney Place are Sydney Gardens and the Holburne Museum. (New) Sydney Place opens onto Sydney Gardens, with the entrance to the centre terrace house mirroring that of the gates in to the Gardens. A New Sydney Place LTN would re-connect all 3 heritage assets in a single stroke. Don Foster, MP for Bath, and B&NES officers also submitted the following points at the Whitehall meeting in April 2001:

"There is an important historic and architectural relationship between New Sydney Place and Grade I listed Sydney Gardens, ... acknowledged as the most important of Bath's six Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest, and the only surviving Georgian "pleasure gardens" in the United Kingdom still retaining its original configuration. The gardens and terrace were literally "made for each other" when the area was originally planned and developed in the reign of George III". (Annex 7, 2.5).

Figures 15 and 16 (from the Bath in Time Collection) show clearly the movement of people between (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Gardens, and the pathways and gates connecting the two areas.



Figure 15 Sydney Gardens and (New) Sydney Place, c. 1815



Figure 16 Sydney Gardens and the entrance from (New) Sydney Place, c. 1840



Figure 17 Sydney Hotel, (New) Sydney Place and St Mary's Church, c. 1815



Figure 18 Contemporary interaction: (New) Sydney Place and the gardens of the Holburne Museum, July 1986

5.2.2 The iconic Holburne Museum, which opens onto Sydney Gardens whilst also facing down Great Pulteney Street and across to (New) Sydney Place, was built in 1796 when Masters succeeded Baldwin and oversaw the completion of the building, which became and an integral part of Sydney Gardens (Figure 17). Today it is the venue for international arts exhibitions and events that attract large audiences. It also facilitates local educational and cultural projects and activities, and its broad reach makes it a vibrant community hub. Its café, with its large, attractive indoor and outdoor Gardens setting, is one of the most popular in Bath. Figure 18 is of a contemporary installation at the Holburne Museum, and highlights its close relationship with (New) Sydney Place.

5.2.3 In B&NES' Draft Bathwick Character Appraisal (2018) the assets previously mentioned here are acknowledged for their exceptional architectural and historical significance:

"The World Heritage Site is ascribed as possessing Outstanding Universal Value whose attributes can be seen to be applied to a great many features of this Character Area."
(2018: 13, p 31)

In the same document (https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/bathwick_draft-june_2018_low_res.pdf), the risks to this jewel are also clearly stated:

“The area is effectively cut in half by the busy thoroughfare that is the A36, causing pollution, noise and safety issues surrounding crossing the road to some of the more important cultural attractions.

Traffic load is now at such a level that erosion of the fabric is inevitable, with pollutants likely to cause surface damage and high levels of airborne chemicals such as nitrous oxide posing threats to health”. (ibid., p 32)

Our proposal for a New Sydney Place LTN would enable a re-connection of these spectacular assets within a traffic-free and easily accessible environment, which would reclaim, re-create, revive and protect this key historical and cultural relationship.

6 Scale / severity of the problem

6.1 Rat-running: Every day, all day. Persistent, to the point of back-up during commuter and school run times. Large Impact.

6.2 Non-compliance with the 20mph limit—speeding cars, motor bikes and coaches. The speed limit here is “honoured more in the breach than in the observance.” Cars doing in excess of twice the speed limit are commonly observed in both directions. **Every day, all day** (less between 12.00 hrs midnight and 06.00hrs). **Persistent. Large Impact.**

6.3 Non-compliance with the 7.5 weight limit—illegal HGVs and coaches. Every day—more in between peak rush hour times. **Persistent. Large impact.**

6.4 Increase in car numbers. Consistently large numbers (less between 12.00 midnight and 06.00hrs). **Persistent. Large impact.**

6.5 Queues, and the problems of congestion and pollution. Every day at rush hour periods. **Persistent. Large impact**

6.6 No safe crossing points; Pedestrians ignored by speeding drivers, who often signal their having noticed them not by slowing down but by blowing their horns. **Every day. Persistent. Large impact**

6.7 Cyclists under threat by proximity and speed of vehicles. **Every day. Persistent. Large impact**

6.8 Narrow pavements outside Sydney Gardens and on the bridge that create problems for safe walking and social distancing. **Every day. Persistent. Large impact.**

6.9 Limited and restricted parking for residents. **Every day. Persistent. Large impact.**

6.10 Serious damage to the road and heritage assets through damaged fabric and infrastructures, and vibration to buildings, plasterwork, windows. **At random times. Large Impact.**

7 Types of outcomes / benefits / opportunities

The long-awaited transformation of our area will exemplify how an LTN can integrate effectively within a larger scheme for Bath. Specifically it will:

Improve air quality, health and well being for residents, children, the elderly and visitors by:

- ✓ Removing traffic and the negative impacts of overweight, speeding and polluting vehicles
- ✓ Promoting active travel modes including walking and cycling
- ✓ Encouraging physical activity through safe access to the Gardens and the canal, getting out into the communal space, and choosing not to drive

Revive and protect the public realm through:

- ✓ Removing the negative impacts of through traffic
- ✓ Protecting and enabling easier access to heritage and leisure assets of exceptional quality—in particular the interrelated Holburne Museum, Sydney Gardens, (New) Sydney Place, the famous Kennet and Avon Canal, and the historic centre of Bath via Great Pulteney Street
- ✓ Improving walking and cycling spaces
- ✓ Planning for seating and meeting points

Enable greater community engagement and interaction by:

- ✓ Removing through traffic that minimizes movement, restricts conversation, pollutes people, plants and vegetation—all of which will have the opportunity to thrive

Enable an improved balance between modes of travel by:

- ✓ Facilitating a residents' parking scheme
- ✓ Sympathetically accommodating EV charging facilities
- ✓ Creating enhanced spaces for walking and cycling infrastructures
- ✓ Planning for upgraded cycle and bike parks and storage, and parking for taxis, emergency vehicles and deliveries

Enable Bath's residents and visitors easy access to a range of top quality experiences including:

- ✓ International art—world famous architecture—a variety of educational projects
- ✓ Stunning gardens—a local café for relaxation—the Brunel bridge
- ✓ The beautiful waterways of the Kennet and Avon Canal, with its wildlife habitats and moorings

8 Local level of support for this request

8.1 There have been significant local levels of support for a New Sydney Place LTN for over twenty years, as is evidenced most recently in our proposal to be in B&NES CAZ as the first step towards making neighbourhoods “breathable” and therefore more “liveable.” B&NES LSC 2020 website is further evidence of the views of numerous individuals who have ‘had their say’ and/or signed in agreement for improving walking and cycling, and removing traffic. Many other neighbours (who are not computer-literate) have spoken out, written or emailed in support of the New Sydney Place LTN proposal, and produced a large handwritten petition in favour. The Sydney Place Residents Association and Sydney Place Action Group, representing (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Mews, has been active in contributing to consultations and in working closely with B&NES Officers to find solutions to address these selfsame issues since its formation in 2000.

In 2002, thanks to the leadership and widespread support of B&NES Members and Officers as well as Don Foster, MP, and the wholehearted support of virtually all the residents of the neighbourhood, we very nearly succeeded in seeing this neighbourhood transformed into what would today be called an “LTN.” B&NES Council’s proposal got as far as a Second-Stage Public Consultation before being shot down by the once all-powerful motorists’ lobby, in spite of the fact that it had the benefit to motorists, as demonstrated in computer simulations run by engineers in the Traffic Management Team, of enabling the UTMC system to reduce and improve traffic flows and cut down journey times and delays. (See Annex 5 for B&NES Council’s favoured design and detailed arguments from two decades ago.)

8.2. Potential problems

8.2.1 Access

Our proposal does not affect access *per se* to and from the Bath Spa Hotel, Clan House, Vellore Lane or the four other large properties along Sydney Road. It does mean that vehicles from those properties will not be able to travel up (New) Sydney Place but will have to follow the main A36 route and access Sydney Road from Beckford Road or Warminster Road. However, it will make cycling and walking easier for those residents and visitors to the area.

8.2.2 Change of habit for ‘rat-runners’

Our proposal will inevitably cause some frustration at first for those who currently use (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Road as a quick short-cut for, for example, commuting, shopping or a school run. On the other hand, we residents should not be subjected to large amounts of polluting, speeding traffic to the detriment of our health in order to enable motorists to dodge the traffic signals. The car is the last on the list of B&NES priorities, and pedestrians and cyclists are at the top, as confirmed in B&NES Low Traffic Neighbourhood Strategy (Final Draft), 2020:

“The B&NES Public Realm and Movement Strategy outlines the vision for a bold and innovative approach, where old hierarchies of car and pedestrian are reversed, giving people, cyclists and public transport priority access.” (3.1; pp 12)

8.2.3 Movement of rat-running traffic back onto the A36 trunk road

We acknowledge that by creating a New Sydney Place LTN, rat-running traffic along (New) Sydney Place will be moved back onto the A36 Beckford Road and (old) Sydney Place, which it should have been on in the first place. Any increase would be on the side furthest away from (old) Sydney Place terrace. There would be no increase in traffic along Darlington Street.

There appears to be little concern regarding traffic *per se* along (old) Sydney Place and the A36 Beckford Road on B&NES LSC 2020 website. Where there is a concern, it relates to the speed of traffic and the associated safety of pedestrians and cyclists. B&NES proposal for a 20 mph limit on these roads plus an improved cycle lane on A36 Beckford Road should help to minimize traffic concerns. Enforcement of speed restriction measures would be essential, as would be the case along all parts of the A36 and A4 routes.

If walking or cycling is prioritized along with small local buses, traffic may not increase, and local rat running should reduce if traffic into Bath is restricted, as per B&NES vision. Bath through traffic would use the designated A36 and, if current negotiations are successful, will use the A350 and M4, which would reduce numbers significantly.

In addition, and subject to the advice and knowledge of B&NES Council experts, the potential for improving the traffic flow past Darlington Street by removing the priority right turn lane into (New) Sydney Place is likely to be beneficial. With more space available for traffic moving along the A36, and without the queuing to turn right and the confusion at the traffic lights, there is the added option of moving the traffic further away from the face of Darlington Street terrace—and from the close proximity of polluting and noisy vehicles.

In any case, the computerized UTMC (Urban Traffic Management and Control) system, from what has been explained to us in the past by B&NES Officers from the Traffic Management Team who had run simulations on both scenarios, would be far *more* effective in reducing queues and moving cohorts of vehicles through more efficiently and reducing travel times for all motorists if vehicles were prevented from bypassing the primary route (rat-running along Sydney Road), as well as minimizing the environmental impact of build-up of queueing traffic at the Bathwick Street and Beckford Road lights, as the traffic would be able to be moved through more efficiently, with less queuing, in the absence of the right turn into (New) Sydney Place from Darlington Street.

One of the principal objections back in 2003 from B&NES Officers on the Traffic Management Team to permitting through-traffic to continue to use (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Road to bypass traffic signals, was that such rat-running would have a *net adverse effect* on traffic flows, which indeed seems to be the case.

From what we have been given to understand by B&NES engineers, preventing a minority of rogue drivers from rat-running down (New) Sydney Place and Sydney Road is unlikely to lead to longer queues on the primary A36 route, i. e. along Darlington Street, Beckford Road, and (old) Sydney Place; quite the contrary, if anything, the opposite is likely to be the case. (See 8.1 above)

An upgraded Toucan crossing between Great Pulteney Street and (New) Sydney Place would significantly improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and create a physical and

visual fusion of the two spaces. Residents and visitors could promenade along Bath's longest, single world heritage asset, and the city's most architecturally coherent, in spite of the intersection that would otherwise divide them.

Figure 19 reminds us of the ways in which this city space was designed for pedestrians. Walking was the dominant mode of travel in Bath in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, after which time vehicle numbers grew year on year. B&NES' plans to remove and reduce excessive traffic loads through LTNs and associated measures will allow walking (and cycling) to prevail again, and contribute to the overarching Climate Emergency measures that underpin B&NES' vision.



Figure 19
Lord Mayor unveiling tablet,
Sydney Place 1909

Conclusion

Frustration and a lack of action, including the failure to act on the recommendations of a three-year Sydney Gardens Traffic Survey and the rejection of two bypass proposals—without providing alternative solutions—have led to an overwhelming support for B&NES' Climate Emergency response through the creation of LTNs, and specifically the long awaited LTN for (New) Sydney Place.

It is not surprising that we fully endorse B&NES commitment to elevate life for our residents and visitors away from the endless burden of traffic to a space where health, well-being and community development is a priority—an entitlement of every individual, especially our children and our infirm.

This stunning location will flourish. A New Sydney Place LTN will revive the balance between the north and south of Bath, and draw attention to our outstanding example of world-class architectural and cultural heritage. Above all it will demonstrate how the past can integrate with the present and influence the future through conserving and re-creating a city space that works, and responds to the challenges and changing priorities of the 21st century.

We submit our proposal for consideration to be one of Bath's first and most successful LTNs.

References

- 1 **B&NES Liveable Neighbourhoods Consultation | B&NES Low Traffic Neighbourhood Strategy**
<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/liveable-neighbourhoods-consultation>
<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/FINAL%20DRAFT%20LTN%20Strategy.pdf>
- 2 **B&NES Liveable Streets Commonplace (B&NES LSC)**
<https://bathnesliveablestreets.commonplace.is>
- 3 **Draft Bathwick Character Appraisal. Bath Conservation Area. June 2018**
https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/bathwick_draft-june_2018_low_res.pdf
- 4 **Sydney Gardens**
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001258>
- 5 **Nos. 93–103 (consec) including No. 93A and attached forecourt and railings**
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1395300>

Annexes

- Annex 1** Sydney Gardens Traffic Scheme, Bath:
Decision Register by B&NES Executive Member for Transport, Sir Elgar Jenkins, 15th September 2003
- Annex 2** Department for Transport letter to B&NES, redacted, 29th October 2012.
- Annex 3** Email to B&NES Traffic Management, 27th August 2014
- Annex 4** B&NES Traffic Survey, 2018
- Annex 5** Proposed Highways Improvements around Sydney Gardens, Bath: Second Stage Public Consultation, May 2002
- Annex 6** B&NES Council Executive Report on the Second Stage Sydney Gardens Traffic Scheme Consultation, February 2003.
- Annex 7** Excerpts from the evidence submitted to the Minister for Transport in the Department for Environment, Transport & the Regions by Don Foster, MP & Officers of B&NES Council at a meeting in Whitehall, 30th April 2001
- Annex 8** “Snap Survey” of Sydney Road traffic by 6 residents, taken at random times during the week of October 19th 2020.

Dates and further details of Figures 1–19

Figures 1a and 1b A speeding car crashes into 94 (New) Sydney Place, circa 2004

Figure 2 Queues on (New) Sydney Place when the A36 is empty. 11th October 2020 at 08.26 hrs.

Figure 3 Traffic travelling at speed round the bend from Darlington Street onto New Sydney Place. 10th January 2021 at 15.49 hrs.

Figure 4 Traffic queuing at the Darlington Street junction to make a short cut/rat-run past (New) Sydney Place. Please note – there is no traffic on the A36 inside lane – the main trunk route. 13th December 2020 at 13.12 hrs.

Figure 5 A lorry swinging wide to cut the corner onto Darlington Street, taking up over half of the road and exceeding the weight limit. 6th November 2020 at 09.46 hrs.

Figures 6 and 7 Examples of lorries of various weights over 7.5 tonnes travelling illegally along (New) Sydney Place. 1st February 2021 at 16.13 hrs. (Figure 6) and 22nd January 2021 at 10.58 hrs. (Figure 7)

Figure 8 One of numerous coaches that use (New) Sydney Place as a short cut to and from the A36.

Figure 9 Queues of cars and vans, with idling engines, waiting to access the A36 and avoid the traffic lights.

Figure 10 An example of an elderly and disabled person repeatedly ignored by cars and unable to cross the road. 23rd January 2021 at 14.09 hrs.

Figures 11 and 12 Pedestrians trying to socially distance and caught between parked cars and vehicles travelling at speed. 15th January at 15.04 hrs. (Figure 11) and 1st January 2021 at 14.48 hrs. (Figure 12)

Figures 13 and 14 Vision obscured and access blocked by cars. 21st January 2021 at 14.42 hrs. (Figure 13) and 22nd January at 11.28 hrs. (Figure 14)

Figures 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 are taken from The Bath in Time Curated Print Collection.
www.bathintime.co.uk