



THE FAVERSHAM SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1962

FLEUR DE LIS HERITAGE CENTRE

ESTABLISHED 1977

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02 September 2020

Schemes Planning and Delivery,
Kent County Council,
Ashford Highways Depot,
Javelin Way,
Henwood Industrial Estate,
Ashford TN24 8AD

Dear Highways Team,

A251 / A2 Junction Improvements

I am writing on behalf of the Chairman and Trustees of the Faversham Society in response to your consultation exercise. Our Society has over 900 members, many of whom are taking a considerable interest in this scheme, which is being put forward at a critical moment in the Town's development.

We appreciate the opportunity to put forward our views. Please accept that we couldn't do so in the form of a questionnaire, and instead they are set out in the attached document.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher Wright



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A2/A251 junction improvement Faversham Society response

Overview

The junction of A251 with Watling Street is a focal point in the townscape that serves many purposes, not just as a vehicular traffic link but also a gateway to a medieval Town, a crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists, a streetscape for local residents, and a passageway to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south.

Now that walking and cycling are being enthusiastically promoted by the government, the Kent County Council, the Swale Borough Council and the Town Council, the A251 junction improvement scheme is an important opportunity to begin re-shaping the Town's traffic circulation system to reflect the changing nature of travel during the next decade. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan aims to encourage active travel rather than car dependency to protect the Town's medieval road network and built heritage during a period of intensive housing development. The junction improvement scheme should recognize and actively reinforce the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan together with the recently introduced Twenty's Plenty initiative.

Watling Street itself will change character as the Town expands southwards, generating a new demand for short trips linking housing estates to the south with the Town centre to the north. Currently there are only two designated crossing places along the whole of the 2.5 kilometre length lying within the Town boundary, creating in our view an unacceptable degree of severance in a Town of this nature. The junction improvement scheme should not merely focus on vehicular traffic, but form part of an integrated mobility plan that incorporates meaningful pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, supporting the changing role of Watling Street as a spine for local movement, a streetscape asset, an environmental corridor and an arena that encourages and rewards active travel.

Junction design

The proposed junction is essentially aimed at vehicular traffic capacity, with few facilities for pedestrians and none for cyclists. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the design could be improved to include:

- infrastructure for cycling (cycle lanes, advanced stop lines (ASLs) and/or an active travel 'scramble' phase for pedestrians and cycles,
- pedestrian crossings on all arms, not just one, with wider footways,
- a 20mph speed limit through the junction to protect pedestrians and cyclists,



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- a landscaping strategy to blend the design into the natural landscape of Faversham including a public art strategy to emphasise its importance as gateway into the town,
- Junction design geometry that creates a sense of place, specifically stop lines and crossings at 90 degrees to each other
- Sympathetic lighting and minimal poles, with lighting and signalling integrated,
- no white hatching (unused space can be used instead for planting and/or public art.

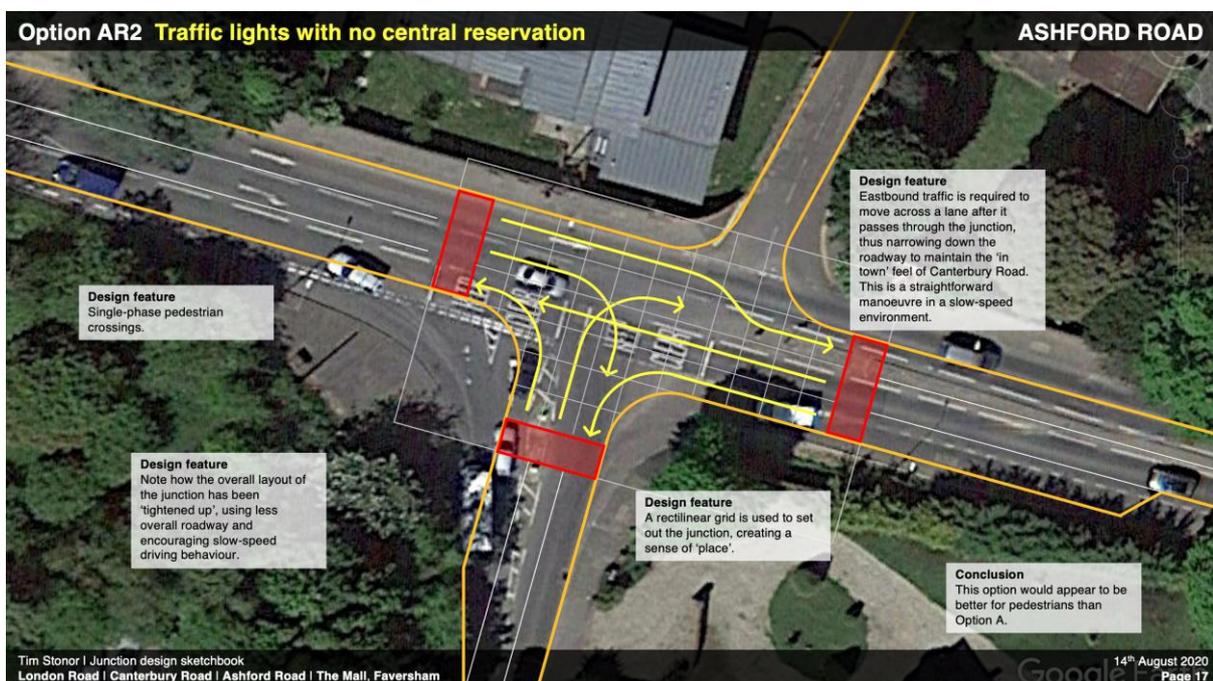


Figure 1: Some design suggestions

Conclusion

As it stands, the Faversham Society cannot support the proposed design. We believe there is potential for much more to be achieved at this site, and we warmly invite officers and representatives of the County Council to engage in discussions with our team about alternative possibilities that meet the aims and objectives of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

Tim Stonor, Chris Wright on behalf of the Trustees
1 September 2020



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