

# ladder traffic calming proposal

- *a personal perspective from Jono Clay-Michael*

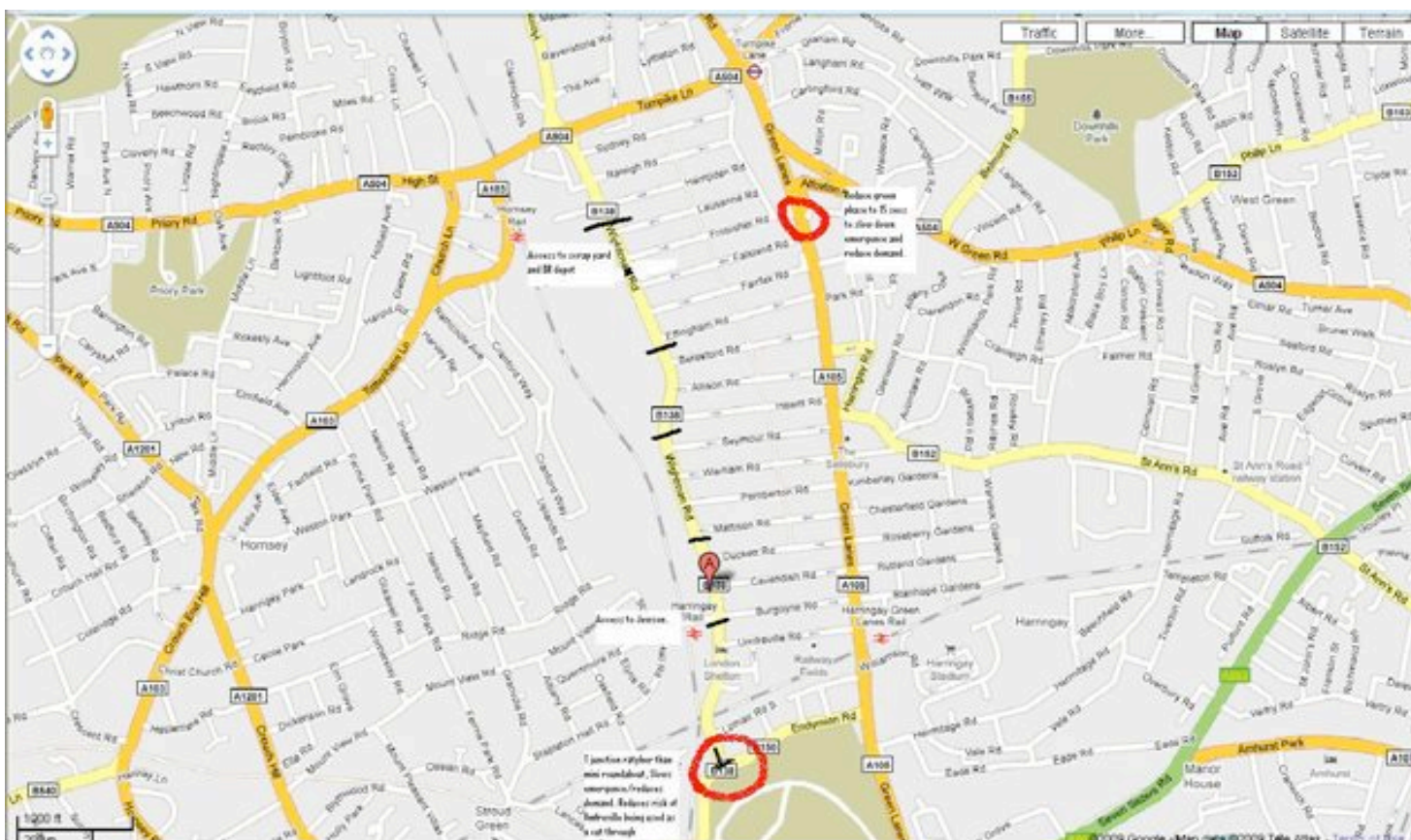
## the problem and its history

Over the last 25 years or so Wightman Road has gone from being a quiet residential B road to a busy thoroughfare, partly due to the increase in vehicular usage but mainly as a cut through to avoid Green Lanes. This has gone on to develop into shortcuts to avoid sections of Green Lanes by joining and entering Wightman Road at various points using the Ladder rung roads rather than just travelling along the whole length of Wightman Road thereby increasing the traffic flow through these residential side streets.

## the proposal

To close Wightman Road to through traffic by placing five sets of gates at various points along its length.

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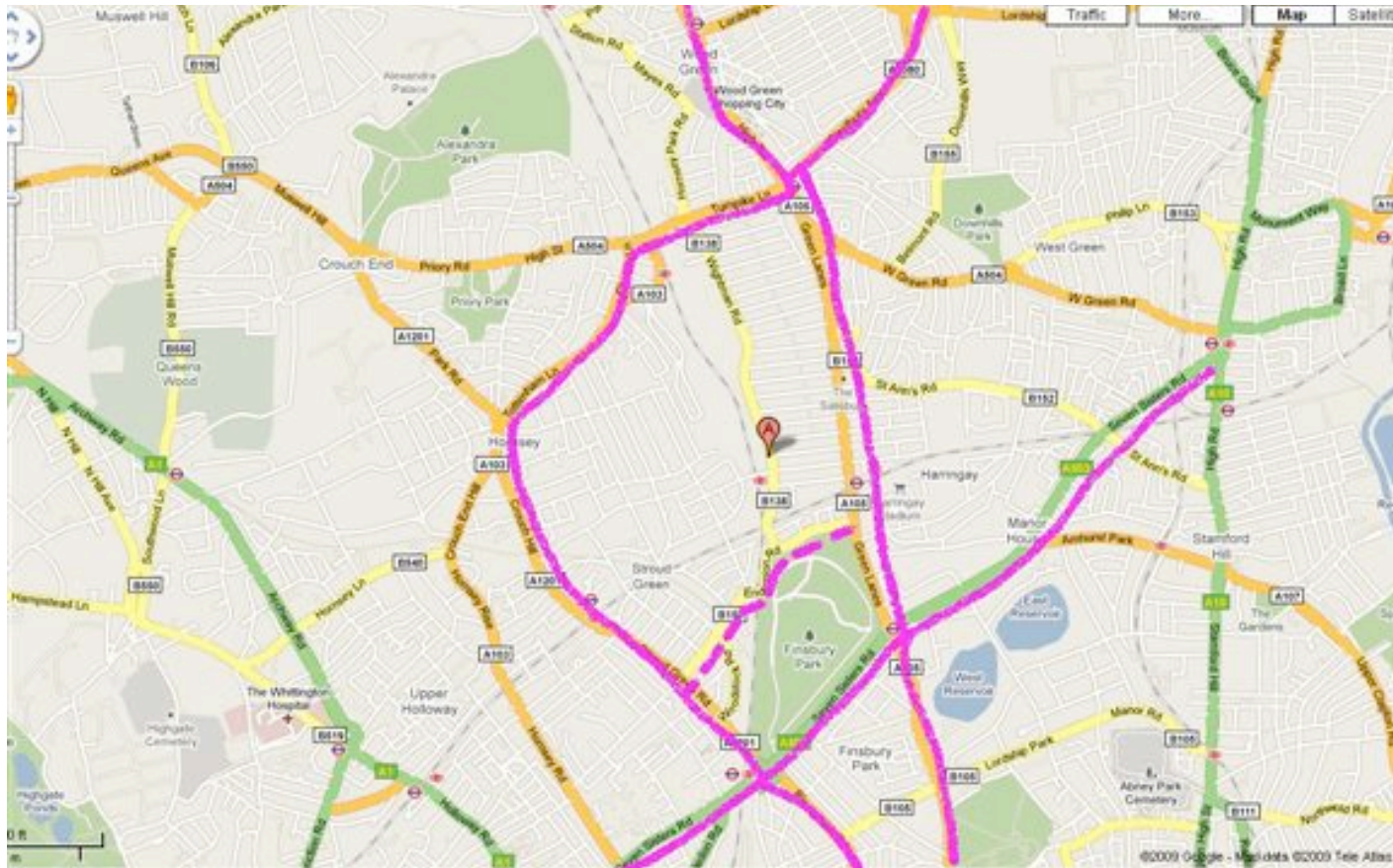
## map notes

Black bars represent the gates. At Frobisher Road / Green Lanes the traffic lights could be rephased as explained below to reduce demand. At the junction of Alroy and Endymion roads, the junction could revert to a T junction with traffic in Alroy Road giving way to traffic in Endymion Road. This would slow emergence, give precedence to Endymion Road and reduces the risk of Umfraville Road being used as a cut through.

Note, (added Dec 2010): The Frobisher Road junction change might be introduced as part of the Green Lanes Corridor study.

## overview

Wightman Road and the Ladder rung roads are surrounded by A roads down which traffic should be directed as shown on the map below.



There are further A roads encircling this map. There is no need for traffic to use Wightman Road and the Ladder rung roads as through routes.

Commuters' cars, delivery vans and lorries use these roads to avoid Green Lanes where they would be better encouraged to avoid the area entirely and use the surrounding A roads.

Questions have been asked about the impact on proposed housing developments but it is submitted that we must be pragmatic and deal with the problems as we see them today and not that of an unclear future where the extent and timing of such developments is unknown. It is also suggested that if the closure is brought in before any new developments are completed the residents of such developments would not have known of any option other than to travel around the closure using the A roads.

A holistic approach might suggest that there would need to be improvements to the A roads surrounding Wightman Road however this is refuted as the gradual planned decrease in traffic levels and the staged fitting of the gates, utilising short term closures, would prevent a large sudden surge of vehicles in the surrounding A roads and they should absorb the minor changes as they come in.

## the plan

Rather than put a closure in overnight the idea is to gradually reduce the traffic flow along Wightman Road and the Ladder rung roads and then put the closure in after a series of short-term closures when the gates are fitted and upgrade work done. This will help to educate those who use the road of the available alternative routes in advance rather than at the time of implementation.

## the pros

1. Reduced noise.
2. Reduced pollution.
3. Reduced dirt, road filth.
4. Reduced vibration and associated damage to properties.
5. Reduced damage to parked cars by passing traffic that tends not to stop.
6. Increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
7. Increased safety for children walking to and from school and being in the street near their homes.



8. Increased feeling of safety; less people around suggests less danger.
9. People naturally take an interest in their surroundings and help to police the area by being able to see it rather than have their vision obscured by the flow of traffic and persons through it. This is built upon by the 'cul-de-sac culture' as below.
10. Reduced crime as through traffic causes through crime. A lot of crime is opportunist, the criminal sees the opportunity as he travels along, takes the opportunity and then continues travelling along. Criminals like anonymity they don't like to be in areas such as cul-de-sacs where they will look out of place and be noticed. There are no easy escape routes.
11. A 'cul-de-sac culture' is generated where people get to know their community as the through flow of commuters is removed they come into contact with those that live there and these contacts become more common and people start to recognise and acknowledge each other and so the feeling of belonging grows.
12. Pride in their community develops. It becomes worth cleaning the front of your house and windows as they will stay clean rather than get dirty quickly due to traffic dust and fumes. The area looks better.
13. Lower turn round in residents. Where people currently move in to the area on a 6 month let and soon move due to the noise, traffic etc the landlords have to find new tenants with the incumbent admin and financial costs that incurs. The tenants move in and often dump the old mattresses and some of the furniture that makes the area look worse and costs the council. This cost reduces the money that could be spent on other projects for the community.
14. Where tenants decide to stay on due to the improved environment they will tend to develop a pride in their home and not see it as a short term housing solution and will help to look after and maintain their home again helping to improve the look of the area and the pride the community has in the area.
15. Property values increase as soon as the closures go in due to the lack of through traffic etc and again as the area becomes tidier and the burgeoning community effect is felt.
16. Improvements to the area such as tree planting, cleaning projects etc have a more significant benefit and longer life span as there is less erosion to them caused by the traffic, fumes, background noise.

17. The whole project can be implemented at minimal cost as most of the infrastructure is in place. The sites at which the gates are proposed already have central islands that have a power source for any signage required. The gates could be hung from a post on the mid point of either kerb to prevent motorcycle avoidance but still allow cyclists and pedestrians to pass. They would close against a post in the central island thereby not reducing the available road width should the gates need to be opened in an emergency. The gates would be locked using padlocks or similar that can be opened using the FB1 key that the emergency services can have supplied to them.
18. In day-to-day calls the emergency services would gain access via the normal Ladder road routes. Should a spontaneous incident require that a section of Green Lanes be closed then vehicles under 7.5 tons could be diverted up and down the ladder roads to avoid the closure. Vehicles over 7.5 tons would have to be diverted via Seven Sisters Road and Stroud Green or according to the current diversion plan.
19. In the case of a more substantial closure sub 7.5 ton vehicles could be diverted via Wightman Road and the gates would be opened for such purpose. In which case a police car with an FB1 key could travel the length of Wightman Road and open the gates in minutes. There would need to be a system in place to ensure ready availability of the keys such as having an FB1 key on every response vehicle key fob or in the vehicle's log book which would need to be checked on the start of each shift. Vehicles above 7.5 tons would have to be diverted as mentioned above.
20. Less wear and tear to the roads means lower repair costs. The roads remain in good condition for longer and save money that could be used elsewhere in the area.
21. Some of the traffic using Wightman Rd would be directed to Green Lanes that might bring more business to the traders in the area.
22. If, after having the closure in place for some time, it has been found that it is not necessary to use Wightman Road as a diversion should Green Lanes be closed then the cars could stop parking on the pavements in Wightman Road. This would reduce the road width down to single file, meaning that when two, of the few, vehicles in the road meet each other one would have to let the other through using the ready made passing places at each end of the keep left islands that are already in situ. This would further slow any traffic and make it safer to all.
23. By not having cars parked on the footpaths this would give pedestrians more room and it would help to open up the pavements making them more appealing to use. It would also go to better lighting the pavement by reducing the shadows caused by cars. This would make people feel safer, reduce the fear of crime and more likely to walk rather than drive further reducing traffic and helping the environment. This appears to be the case where parked cars were cleared away from Endymion Road opposite Finsbury Park and double yellow lines installed.

24. With residents becoming more actively involved in their streets, incidents of fly tipping and mattress dumping would decrease as people would pay attention to vans pulling up outside and new tenants moving in etc.
25. The frequency of passing of cars with loud bass line vibrating stereos would drop off.
26. With fewer vehicles looking to enter or exit the ladder roads from Green Lanes this would allow traffic in Green Lanes to be less hindered and traffic flow to improve significantly. RTA's would decrease reducing risk to road users and the congestion such incidents cause.

## the cons

1. Residents would have to drive further to get to or get out from the Ladder and their homes.
2. They would have to use Green Lanes and it's associated traffic until Green Lanes is improved which might come about under the Mayor's plans.
3. The speed humps would need to stay to prevent nocturnal race circuits developing.
4. Deliveries would need to be given specific directions as to which Ladder Roads to use to gain access.
5. Traffic joining Green Lanes from St Ann's area would have no option but to turn into Green Lanes.
6. There might be an increase in traffic entering Wightman Rd from the Hornsey High Street direction to avoid Turnpike Lane and travelling down Hampden Road to cut through to Green Lanes via Willoughby Road. This could be discouraged by putting a very short green light phase on the lights at the junction of Frobisher Road and Green Lanes and extending the central island in Turnpike Lane at the junction with Willoughby Rd to the west up to/nearer to the pedestrian crossing to fully prevent right turns from Willoughby Road into Turnpike Lane. These are currently possible with some determination by car and van drivers.
7. There would be costs around consultation and developing awareness to the plans.

## the idea

Wightman Road is has just had a 20mph zone put in place. This will reduce some of the traffic volume.

Increased police presence in the road will deter vehicles contravening the 7.5 ton limits which will help to reduce traffic etc. The London Borough of Haringey are devising enforcement techniques.

An introduction of a no right turn at the Green Lanes end of Hewitt Road will also have a significant traffic reducing impact, (see appendix 1 below).

This gradual redirection of traffic will go towards preventing a tsunami wave of traffic to surrounding roads when the closure goes in.



## appendix - Hewitt Road / Green Lanes No Right Turn

In an endeavour to reduce through traffic in the Ladder rung roads and Wightman Road, it is suggested that a 'No Right Turn' restriction be placed on Hewitt Road at the junction with Green Lanes.

Hewitt Road suffers from a disproportionately higher level of traffic than other Ladder rung roads as it is the last junction to the north of the junction of Green Lanes with St Ann's Road.

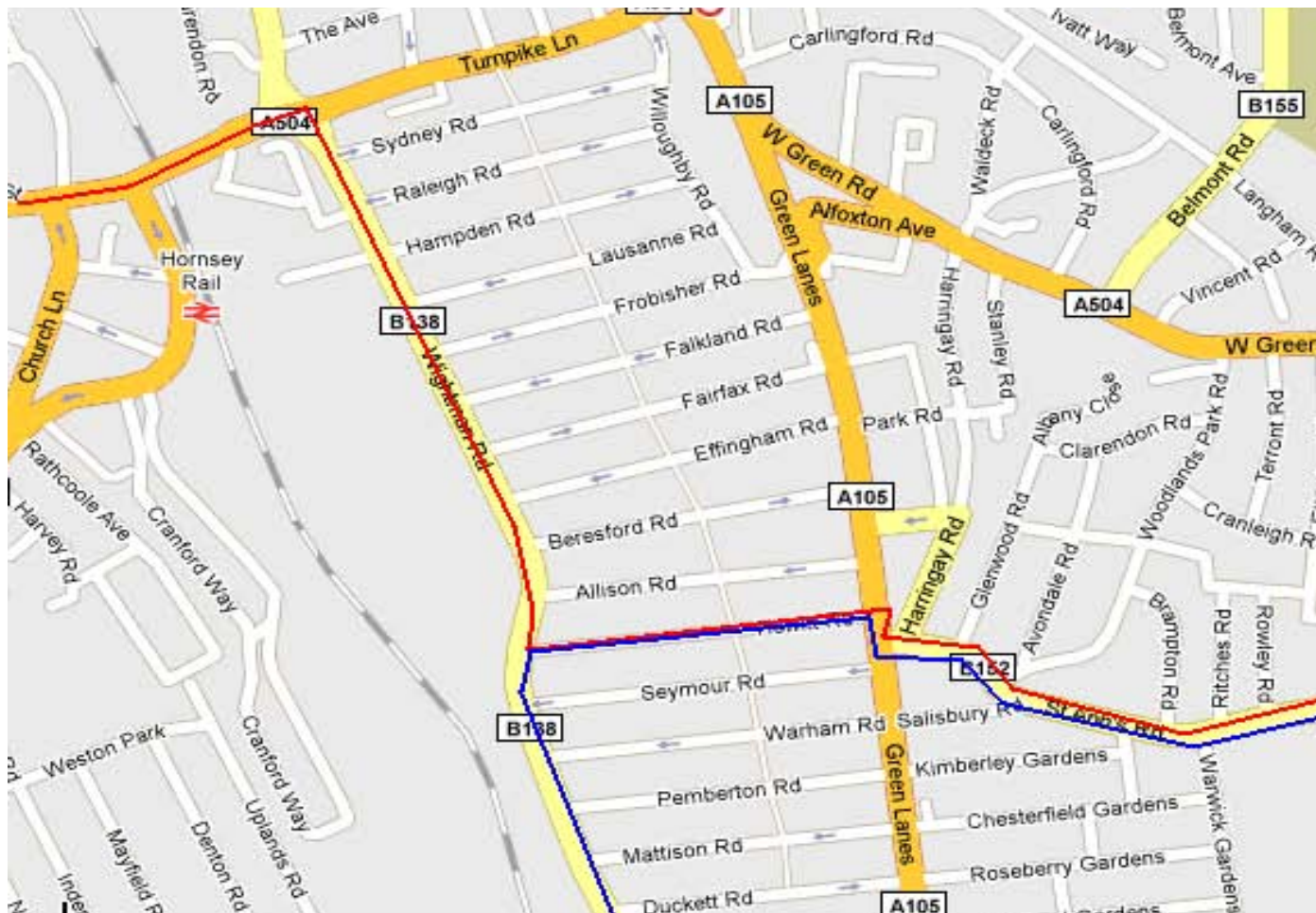
The reasons are thus.

To avoid Turnpike Lane and Green Lanes traffic turns into Wightman Road and then turns into Hewitt Road. At the junction with Green Lanes the traffic turns right into Green Lanes and immediately left into St Ann's Road. Likewise those wishing to avoid Green lanes northbound when travelling from Endymion Rd travel up Wightman Road and down Hewitt Road.

A simple low cost solution would be to put a 'No Right Turn' prohibition at the junction of Hewitt Road and Green Lanes. This would mean that any traffic coming down Hewitt Road would have to turn left into the northbound flow.

This idea was tried some time ago but withdrawn as it was not enforced properly.

Using the London Borough of Haringey CCTV Smart car this offence could now easily be enforced generating funds for the borough which would exceed the set up costs.



# pros

1. Traffic level in Hewitt Road is decreased.
2. Increased safety for pedestrians in Hewitt Road as result of lower traffic level.
3. Reduced noise for residents.
4. Reduced pollution.

5. Reduced road filth.
6. Traffic flow in Green Lanes is improved.
7. Reduced traffic along Wightman Road.
5. Enforcement income for the London Borough of Haringey from Smart car and possibly fixed CCTV camera opposite Hewitt Road on Green Lanes.
6. Reduced wear and tear of road and associated costs.
7. Reduced littering by through traffic.
8. Reduced opportunist passing crime.
9. Reduced damage to parked cars.
10. Reduced incidents of fail to stop RTA's especially those involving larger vans and lorries that appear to be unaware of the collision.

## cons

1. Those wishing to cut through might use adjacent roads however the overall volume will be less and spread out.
2. There will be a degree of U turning in Green Lanes at first but this should diminish as the restriction becomes better known
3. The restriction will need to be very clearly signed at the Wightman Road end of Hewitt Road.
4. It will need the CCTV Smart car to be dedicated to the junction for considerable periods of time to ensure enforcement and making the effective.
5. The CCTV smart car has limited hours of work and therefore the restriction might not be enforced at night etc however this could be overcome by using the fixed camera mentioned above with a system to include the no right turn sign in the picture e.g a mounted mirror inside the junction.