

Torrington Place/Tavistock Place Traffic Order

54 Russell Square Residents Association / Commissioners of Russell Square

On behalf of the above we would wish to make the representations below to the Public Inquiry: -

We are pensioners living in Russell Square and with our friends like to visit a restaurant in Goodge Street but due limited mobility have to take a taxi from Russell Square. We find that now the taxi must either go via Centre Point or Euston Road both of which are very congested. The taxi ride now takes twice as long and costs twice as much, while causing greater pollution.

In August, a neighbour living in Russell Square with a history of heart problems needed to go to UCH and called a taxi. The taxi took her to the hospital but was very much delayed by the traffic congestion in the Euston Road area. After assessment, she was sent by ambulance to Bart's Hospital and had an immediate pacemaker fitted. Fortunately, the initial delay did not have dire consequences but is an example of how limited the road access is to us as local residents in Russell Square.

This is because the only westerly route has been closed by the traffic scheme.

On Thursday 6th October 2016 at 11-00 Russell Square had traffic standing on 4 sides with the engines running and causing a great deal of pollution and noise. I thought I would see what the cause was and it essentially started at the traffic lights in Tavistock Square. Both Bedford Way and Woburn Place had standing traffic all the way back to Russell Square and into and around the square. The traffic lights at the junction between Bedford Way and Tavistock Square have a 15 second green light which allowed 7 vehicles to pass. There were however 30 vehicles stationary in Bedford Way and just to clear that traffic would take 3/4 cycles of the lights without considering the

stationary traffic in Russell Square. There was an ambulance without flashing lights within the queue. The road from Gordon Square however cleared in the 30 seconds of each light, there were no cyclists travelling in either direction and from previous observation there tends to be a rush in the morning going west and a rush in the evening going east.

The main traffic demand is through traffic going north/south clearly therefore the durations given to the north traffic are not correctly balanced particularly after the morning cyclist rush and this results in a build-up of polluting noisy traffic. This junction is also restricted by the excessively large left turning cycle lane and with the narrow northern lane gets blocked by traffic turning right, this did not happen before the changes.

The Junction at Woburn Place and Tavistock Square allows vehicles to only travel in a northerly direction with no left or right apart from cyclist who can turn right. There was again standing traffic back and beyond the traffic lights in Russell Square. The green period for the traffic in this case was 30 seconds and 15 vehicles could pass hence it would take 2/3 cycles of the lights to clear the standing traffic. Again, traffic in the east direction totally cleared during the 30 seconds of their green sequence. The traffic demand was therefore greater on the main road going north than in the side road going east, clearly the lights are not balanced correctly and as a result the build-up progressively increases during the day. The over large cycle lane at this junction also reduces the capacity for northerly traffic.

With both these lights being incorrectly balanced this effects the build-up of traffic around Russell Square and further effects traffic entering the Square from the westerly direction in Guildford Street. This street now carries the westerly traffic that might have used Tavistock Place and the increased volume and the congestion at the junction with Russell Square results in a build-up of standing traffic awaiting to enter the Square. Again, noise and pollution at the very points where many pedestrians

cross the Square to go to the British Museum. Very clearly the changes to Torrington Place and the pollution this has caused are now affecting the potential of some of the 4.5m people who visit the Museum. Not very clever. These conditions have occurred again and cause us noise and nuisance and are injurious to our health.

In the evidence that we have heard we see no evidence that the queuing time for the main north south roads Bedford Way and Woburn Place has not been recorded before or after the introduction of the scheme. This has a pronounced effect on the pollution to which the many residents and hotel guests around 2000 in number on these roads are exposed to.

In Terms of pollution Camden has not monitored the north south route except for one station in the Russell Square Gardens this does not record road site pollution levels and therefore there is no knowledge of the impact of pollution on the wider area of the study.

So our suggestions are :-

- That the traffic could remain one way but should be allowed to travel in a westerly direction for the whole length of the Torrington Place/Tavistock Place route. There is an existing easterly route via Goodge Street etc. This however was the only westerly route between Centre Point and Euston Road. This would help to reduce the traffic entering Russell Square from Guildford Street, and allow access to the other side of Tottenham Court Road.
- The lights at Woburn Place and Bedford Way should give greater durations for traffic wishing to travel north and south. This would reduce noise and pollution in Woburn Place, Bedford Way and Russell Square and improve the health of some of the 4.5million people that walk through the Square on their way to the Museum. Russell Square is also the pride of Camden and is a place where many people go for pleasure and recreation and deserves the cleanest air possible in an urban

park.

- The left turn cycle lanes at Woburn Place and Bedford Way should be reduced in width. This would give the northerly traffic more capacity.