

**BOREHAMWOOD  
SHENLEY ROAD**

**CONTEXT**

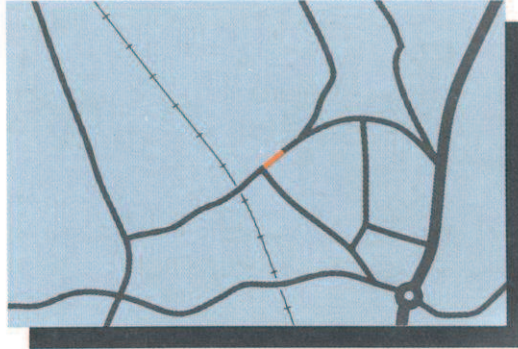
Borehamwood lies to the north of Greater London some 8 km east of Watford. The last period of major growth occurred after the second world war when Borehamwood was chosen as a location for London overspill housing. The rapid influx of new residents in the 1950s resulted in pressure for shopping development, and Shenley Road became the main shopping street.

The town centre has no areas of outstanding townscape. On the whole the architecture is of poor standard and the layout is monotonous. Together with traffic congestion, parked cars and street clutter, Shenley Road offered a poor environment for all users.

**OBJECTIVES**

Since 1987 considerable efforts by the Hertsmere Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council have been applied to the design of a Town Centre Enhancement Scheme for Shenley Road. The main problem which thwarted progress on proposals was the volume of traffic which Shenley Road carries, some 18,000 vehicles per day.

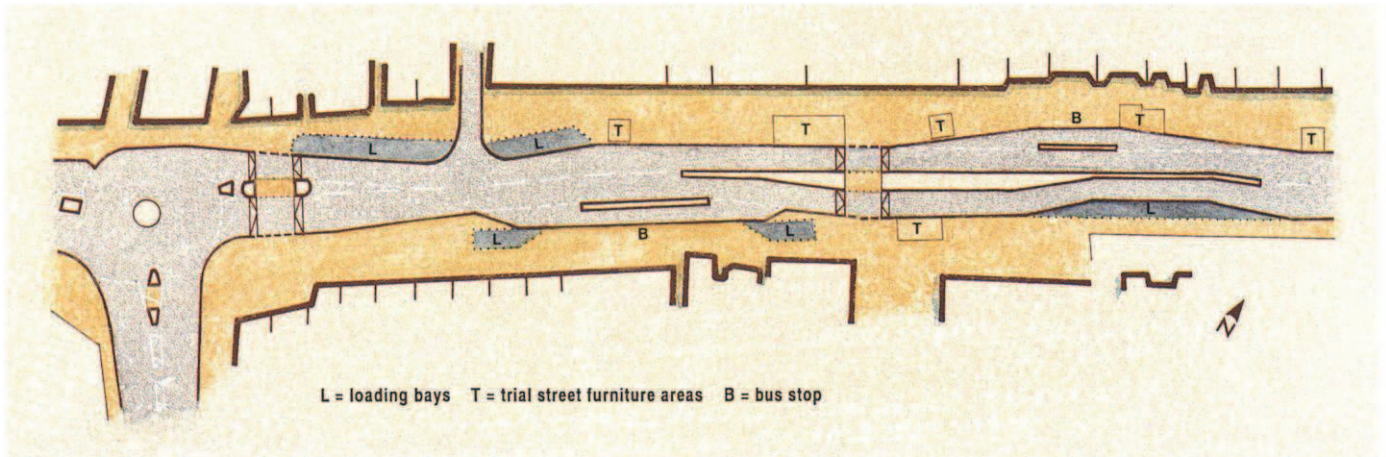
With no opportunities to divert this traffic onto alternative routes, and no space to create a bypass, any scheme would therefore have to accommodate this high volume of traffic.



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The initial objectives of enhancement were seen in terms of traffic conditions in Shenley Road. Firstly, considerable illegal parking “cluttered” the street, created difficulties for pedestrians, and reduced road capacity. Secondly, the aim was to lower vehicle speeds in order to reduce noise, fumes, and the probability of accidents. Thirdly, by maintaining a regular but slower flow of traffic, congestion at peak times could be avoided.

60: Flat top hump to slow traffic and help pedestrians cross, combined with a narrow carriageway and wide central island. A lateral shift has been created with a servicing bay (foreground). (Photo: T. Pharoah)



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61: Mini roundabout replacing traffic signals at the start of the treated section of Shenley Road. A wider central refuge has also been provided. (Photo: T. Pharoah)

**DESCRIPTION**

In 1989, officers from Hertfordshire County Council and Hertsmere Borough Council visited Langenfeld in Germany where problems similar to those in Borehamwood had been tackled (see Langenfeld example). One major difference was that Shenley Road carries almost twice

the volume of traffic of that in Langenfeld's main street. For this reason it was proposed to implement an experimental scheme over part of Shenley Road using low cost materials. A multi-disciplinary team was set up consisting of both Borough and County Council officers. The features of the scheme were designed with the high flow of traffic in mind, and included the following:-

- Provision of a central island, reducing the width of the carriageway to 3.6m in places, with the aim of reducing traffic speed, providing a refuge for pedestrians, and eliminating illegal parking (reinforced by a legal ban)
- Provision of road crossing points using flat top humps to slow traffic and emphasize the presence of pedestrians
- Modification of bus lay-bys to discourage illegal parking by other vehicles
- Removal of traffic lights at two principal junctions and replacement by mini roundabouts, to allow a smooth flow of traffic at lower speed

The use of these traffic calming measures with relatively high traffic flows was breaking new ground, and it was therefore decided that this jointly led scheme would run for an experimental six month period to allow time for modifications and assessment.

Public consultation was seen as a priority. Publicity leaflets were produced and an exhibition describing the aims of the scheme and proposals toured local offices, schools and community centres. Information posters were distributed advising people on how the new features should be used, including encouragement to use the town centre car parks. "Sharing our Environment" became the slogan used on advertising material along with a logo specifically designed for the scheme.

In addition, an Action Group was set up which consists of representatives from the local community, Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, bus operators, people with disabilities, and other interested groups. The Action Group works with the design team, commenting on the work so far, and providing up-dates on the day to day running of the scheme.

#### COST

Not relevant at experimental stage.

#### ASSESSMENT

Before implementation and during the experimental period, monitoring of Shenley Road and other roads in the vicinity was undertaken. Pedestrian movement, parking and servicing were studied and street



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62: Flat top hump at busiest pedestrian crossing point, showing broad central island and ramp markings. (Photo: T. Pharoah)

63: One of the paving and street furniture test areas, adjacent to a flat top hump crossing area. (Photo: T. Pharoah)

interviews were carried out to gain public opinion on the shopping centre as a whole. There is a marked improvement in the treated part of Shenley Road. Pedestrians move more freely and with greater confidence as the traffic flows more evenly at much reduced speeds. As the scheme has proved successful it is to be extended.

To assist in the selection of surface materials and street furniture when the scheme is implemented on a permanent basis, various manufacturers donated paving materials, seats and litter bins. These have been used in test areas within pedestrian spaces and are being assessed for wear and tear, staining and discolouration.

At the end of 1990, the permanent scheme was in the process of being designed as the experimental scheme continued to function. The proposed use of high quality materials, redesign of the existing lighting scheme, new landscaping and co-ordinated street furniture will bring style to the town centre. This, along with the slow and steady movement of traffic, will help to create a place for people to visit, stop and enjoy.