

G) Aesthetics

The beauty and interest, vitality and variety of the streetscene are what make people slow down and enjoy themselves. The sense that public space is valued by those who live in it, use it and care for it encourages us all to value it too.

Baslow Road/Station Road

The monument in the middle of the junction of Baslow Road/Station Road is lost in the middle of a traffic island. It is difficult to cross to see the monument, and traffic mounts the monument's paved surround.



Consider moving the monument to a more sensitive location. By tightening up this junction and widening the pavement on the Bridge Street/Station Road corner, it might be possible to move the monument to this location.

The Bridge

The medieval bridge is beautiful, and a Bakewell tourist attraction. Improving pedestrian access to the bridge would allow more people to admire its beauty and take in the lovely views from the top of the bridge. It was suggested that the bridge could be gently lit at night. However, a colony of bats is reported to live underneath the bridge, and lighting might disturb them, as well as creating light pollution.

Human interest

Of equal or perhaps greater importance to pedestrians is the aesthetic pleasure to be derived from the presence of others and human activity. Even in such varied surroundings, most people on foot can be seen deriving most pleasure from the presence of friends, neighbours and strangers. This sharing of space with strangers is central to our gregarious nature. We rejoice in the excitement of crowds – spend time in any busy town centre like Bakewell to experience this at first hand.

If the good habit of walking, already much in evidence in Bakewell town centre itself, can spread to more neighbouring streets and spaces, and local people can be encouraged to make more and longer journeys on foot, the aesthetic experience of walking in Bakewell will be transformed by the greatest attraction walkers can encounter – each other.

H) Traffic

Wherever you go in the centre of Bakewell, you are never far from problems created by the volume, speed and sheer size of traffic. This is particularly true on market days, when traffic can be relentless. In part, this report is intended to ensure that the many non-traffic related opportunities to improve Bakewell for people on foot are not overlooked due to an overemphasis on traffic issues. Traffic problems can be the hardest to overcome – but that doesn't mean that there are not practical steps that can be taken.

Traffic volume

Undertake detailed study of the heavy goods vehicles travelling through Bakewell – their purpose, their origin and destination, and their route – in order to ascertain whether all the HGV traffic which goes through Bakewell should be doing so. Some local auditors expressed concern that some HGVs were 'rat-running' in the routes which they took.

Traffic speed

One-way system: one way systems can help to reduce allocation of road space to vehicles. However, they can also encourage traffic to move faster – drivers are safe in the knowledge that they will not meet on-coming traffic. Bakewell is suffering from this effect (along Bridge Street and Anchor Square in particular), but without any of the benefits because carriageway width has not been narrowed.

Narrow carriageways and widen pavements around the Bakewell one-way system, including along Bridge Street.

The signage along Buxton Road/Matlock Street is large signage more suitable for dual carriageways. This encourages through-traffic to act as though it is travelling along a main road rather than through an ancient market town.

Replace the road signage with more appropriate signage.

White lines encourage traffic go faster, because it can be sure not to meet any on-coming traffic.

Consider removing white road markings along large sections of Bakewell, to help traffic to slow down.

20 miles per hour zone through-out the centre of Bakewell. This would stretch from the fire station along Buxton Road, to the garage along Matlock Street, to the junction with Station Road along Bridge Street.



The traffic signs through Bakewell are better suited to major dual carriageways than the centre of a market town

Recommendations

These recommendations offer a project-based approach to some key pedestrian issues in Bakewell, together with a number of tasks to deliver detail improvements that might more easily be made to the street environment

It may be that, for local people, certain key priorities have not been addressed here. Many more improvements, both major and minor, are included within the Main Findings section, under separate categories. Those improvements should not be considered as less important than the following recommendations – priorities for action should be determined by those who live and work in Bakewell themselves.

Data

1. Commission **detailed pedestrian flow counts** at a number of locations on and near Bridge Street, Matlock Street and Buxton Road, collate existing data on vehicle flows and numbers arriving in the area by public transport, and assess the commercial and social impact on the local economy by users of different modes, to support initiatives favouring more sustainable transport modes, including walking. Regular pedestrian flow counts will also provide a measure of the effectiveness of any changes implemented.
2. Commission **detailed research into the origin, destination and purpose of the large number of HGVs travelling through Bakewell**. Ascertain the reasons for the large number of lorries, in order to investigate either alternative routes or alternatives to the HGV trips.

Street Clutter

3. **Replace large traffic signs from the main streets in Bakewell**, and replace with smaller signs more in keeping with the historic nature of the town. .

Road Layout

4. Completely **re-design the Buxton Road/Matlock Street/Rutland Square junction**, to give more space for pedestrians, improve the crossings, and provide a more sympathetic setting for the war memorial
5. Create **gateways** to Bakewell town centre, at the fire station along Buxton Road, the far side of the bridge on Bridge Street, and by the petrol station along Matlock Street, to indicate a change in priority from traffic to people.
6. **Widen the pavements** along key sections of Bridge Street, by reducing the road space to a single carriageway.

Crossings

7. Install footway level crossings at all side entries along Bridge Street, Buxton Road and Matlock Street, to **create a pedestrian priority promenade** throughout the town centre.

Footways

8. Initiate a phased programme of **footway renovation along the main streets** to create inclusive, wheelchair-friendly access, paying special attention to side entry treatments and the removal of redundant street furniture.

Pedestrian facilities

9. Commission at least one **drinking fountain** for Bakewell town centre – possible in the small square near Water Lane, or on the corner of Bridge Street/Station Road. Drinking fountains promote good health by reducing the need to buy carbonated sugary drinks when one is thirsty.

Tom Franklin, August 2004