Shared Space

Update on the DfT Research – for WestTrans partners

John Emslie | 26 November 2009
Agenda

- Definitions
- Purpose
- Measuring success
- Evidence
- Working conclusions
- Next steps
Purpose of Study

Allow DfT to make evidence-based recommendations on Shared Space and Shared Surface schemes.

And...

If the case is proved...

-move towards shared understanding of:
  - When Shared Space is an appropriate response
  - How to best provide the Shared Space environments
How

- Literature review

- Sample of existing SS schemes in UK
  - experience & knowledge of local authorities
  - collating monitoring data

- Site visits to SS schemes

- Qualitative research - interviews to record users' experience and views
Definitions

*Shared Surface* - *Simplified Streets* - *Shared Streets*  
*Naked Streets* - *de-cluttering*....

- **not** necessarily describe the same thing or approach  
- describe aspects/features, not objective

A street or place accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles that is designed to enable pedestrians to move more freely by reducing traffic management features that tend to encourage users of vehicles to assume priority

- Deliberate effort to:  
  - reassert the place status of streets, while  
  - maintaining link status for all modes
Definitions
Definitions

Level surface:

- a street surface that is not physically divided by kerb or level differences into areas for particular uses
  - Level surface is a feature of *some* Shared Space schemes
  - not all parts of a level surface necessarily shared (accessible to vehicles)
    - other features, such as street furniture, may physically prevent vehicle access
Exeter – SS – nothing new...
De-cluttering
Multi-use sharing
Sharing – French style
High volume sharing
Connecting places
Functional sharing
Ashford
Exmouth Market – multi-functional
Shared Space in Action
Why use Shared Space?
Visions and Purpose

**Economic regeneration**

**Social well-being - inclusivity**

**City/town profile**

**Access to opportunity/accessibility**

- Placemaking
- Ease of pedestrian movement
- Reduce traffic dominance
- Changes in pedestrian activity
- Maintain or improve safety
Visions and Purposes

- Vision
  - e.g. an accessible environment

- Purpose
  - e.g. improve pedestrian movement

- Actions
  - e.g. reposition pedestrian crossing

LTN 1/08 Traffic Management and Streetscape
### Visions and Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elwick Road, Ashford</th>
<th>New Road, West Bromwich</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vision</strong></td>
<td>Accommodation of growth – summed up as a policy of ‘mend to extend’.</td>
<td>Support town centre regeneration by providing a high quality civic space in the town centre suitable for flexible uses.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>The Ashford Growth Area Development Framework identified an area of significant growth to the south of the existing town centre. The purpose of the project was to transform the ring road in order to connect the existing town centre with the area of planned growth.</td>
<td>Redevelop the link to have the feel of an urban square in which people will want to spend time but maintain bus movement in the town centre</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Actions</strong></td>
<td>Slow traffic prior to entry to the scheme, use a shared level surface with minimal signing to encourage slower speed and reduce physical barriers to pedestrians</td>
<td>Entry treatments to the scheme, low kerb delineation of the bus link, use of seating and planting to encourage pedestrians to spend time in the space.</td>
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Shared Space Application - Evidence
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Economics:
- Associated with increased property value
- Anecdotal evidence of reduced shop vacancy

Pedestrian Movement
- Very little data

Placemaking
- Generally popular with users
- Improved perceptions of personal security
- Decline in perceptions of safety
Shared Space Application - Evidence ii

Reduce Traffic Dominance

- Traffic flows appear to reduce voluntarily
- Speeds generally down BUT, not universal, not always enough
- Overseas evidence suggests vehicles giving way to peds and cyclists

Changes in Pedestrian Activity
- Not often recorded, some evidence
Road Safety

- No increases in casualties
- Possible improvement in casualty rate
- Safe up to c.6,600 vehicles/day
- May be relatively less safe above c.14,000 vehicles/day
- **Grey area in between**
Inclusive design

- Level surface disliked by some visually impaired people
- Level surface often liked by mobility impaired people
- No independent evidence re learning difficulties, hearing impairment
- May be difficult for younger (<8) children
- DPTAC Home Zones research suggests optimum may be level surface with appropriate tactile
Appraisal Report
- initial conclusions
Initial Conclusions
- Shared Space as an Approach

- Has merit - sufficient evidence suggesting well-designed schemes can bring benefits:
  - visual amenity
  - economic performance
  - perceptions of personal safety

- Describes a design approach rather than design type characterised by ‘standard’ features

- SS schemes to be understood as tactics designed to improve:
  - quality of life
  - visual amenity
  - local economic performance and environmental quality
    - *not* traffic schemes

- SS design a compromise between the needs of range of users to *accommodate* rather than exclude particular uses
Initial Conclusions
- User perceptions & safety

- Limited research available, esp operation of SS schemes in UK

- Not all peds comfortable mingling with vehicles
  - provision of clearly defined ‘safe’ space likely to be beneficial

- No evident safety disbenefit at UK schemes
  - casualty numbers relatively constant despite increases in ped & cycle flows

- Users street perceptions improve – but less than with pedestrianisation

- Level surfaces in SS can create specific difficulties for some visually impaired people
  - May also be the case for other vulnerable groups such as young children
  - Conversely, level surface is generally appreciated by mobility impaired people
Initial Conclusions
- Design Considerations

- Full benefits of SS are likely to be achieved when:
  - vehicle flows relatively low
  - speeds effectively controlled
  - features in the space encourage pedestrian activity

- SS schemes highly particular in contexts and design -
generic conclusions need to be treated with caution
Next Steps
Towards guidance

Primary research exploring:

- when do drivers give way?
- how does sharing work?
- what happens to pedestrian behaviour?
- How can Shared Space be made more navigable?
- DfT Guidance
Project

- More information, incl Appraisal Report
  http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/sharedspace/

- User behaviour
  - video observations
  - Understanding behaviour – qualitative research

- Local Transport Note