

GREAT ANCOATS STREET DESIGN REVIEW – Comments by Bryn Buck MIHE (Show Me A Sign)

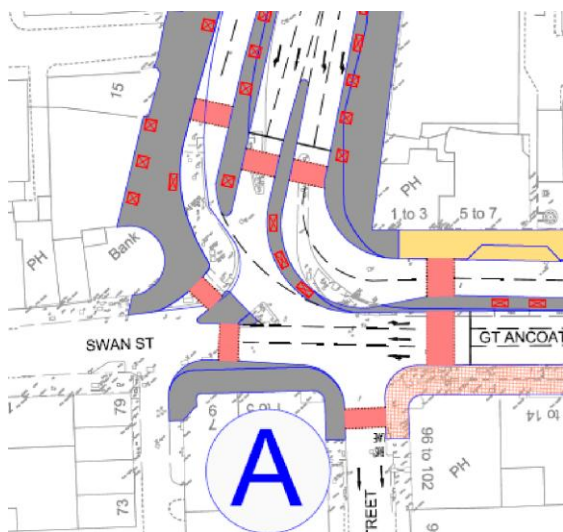
GENERAL:

Problem 1: The lack of dedicated cycling facilities, including what appears to be an active removal of them, forces all cyclist traffic onto the main carriageway. This is unsafe for inexperienced or young cyclists that can be easily intimidated by larger vehicles with the risk of falls or being crushed under a passing vehicle. Failing to provide any provision creates a huge psychological barrier and limits the connectivity between the north side of the city centre and the south side as any journey that requires using the ring road is no longer feasible.

Problem 2: The plan does not indicate lane widths. However, given the urban nature of the road and the constraints worked with it is likely that this width would be between 3.3 and 3.65 metres. This increases the risk of close passes against cyclists as larger vehicles will be wary of crossing the lane lines due to heavy traffic flows. This increases the risk of collisions.

Problem 3: An excessive number of traffic signals along this length (eight in approximately 900 metres) means stop-start traffic, extra emissions, and numerous traffic flow inefficiencies which will continue to ensure that Great Ancoats Street remains congested for the foreseeable future. Rationalising the numbers of right turns would have reduced the requirement for carriageway widening on approaches and enabled the provision of safe cycling infrastructure which in turn would have reduced motorised traffic volumes due to the enablement of active travel along what is presently an extremely hostile corridor to non-motorised traffic.

JUNCTION A: New Cross [Oldham Street, Oldham Road, Great Ancoats Street & Swan Street]

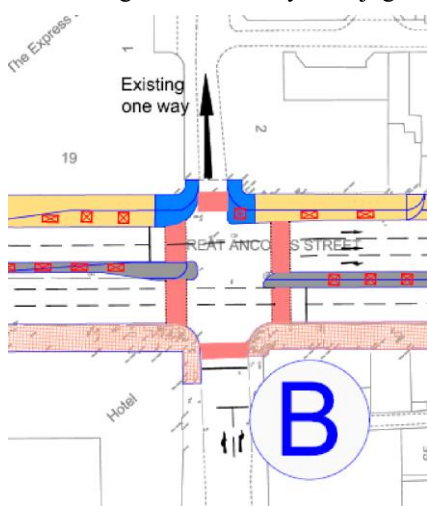


Problem 4: The left turn movement from Oldham Road (top) to Great Ancoats Street (right) shows two pedestrian crossing movements segregated by approximately 40 metres. The second crossing has no stop line, suggesting it is linked to other crossings. This poses a risk of collisions as vehicles that have passed the first stop line have no indication of if the second crossing is in use. The restricted forward visibility posed by the public house on the north east corner makes this even more dangerous. This additionally brings cyclists and pedestrians into conflict.

Problem 5: The right turn movement from Great Ancoats Street into Oldham Road is to be reduced to a single lane. Currently the centre lane of two can be used for ahead and right movements. This reduction in motor vehicle capacity will not only cause queues to trail back through

Junction B, increasing the risk of rear end shunts, but also poses a danger to cyclists who will be ‘pinched’ by fast moving traffic also making the turn due to a lack of segregated infrastructure.

Problem 6: Confusing road markings for the movement from Oldham Road to Oldham Street could cause drivers to hesitate and result in rear end shunts. This movement is problematic for this reason. The plan suggests the existing substandard cyclist ‘jughandle’ from Oldham Road to cross Great Ancoats Street is to be removed.



Any cyclist attempting this movement must now cross two lanes of traffic and execute a ‘dog-leg’ movement, potentially into conflict with oncoming traffic due to likely short intergreen signal periods. This could result in a serious or fatal collision.

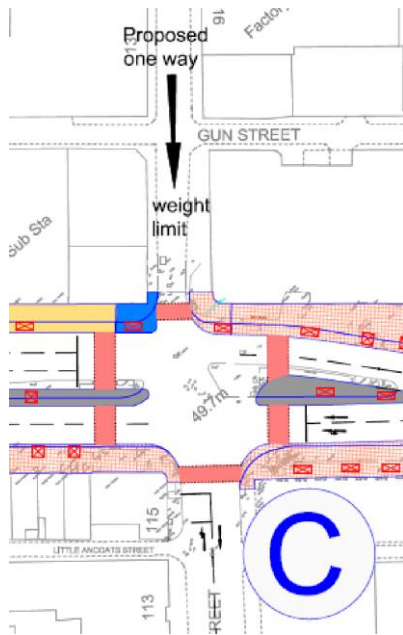
JUNCTION B: Great Ancoats Street, Lever Street & George Leigh Street

Problem 7: The lack of dedicated cycling facilities presents a collision risk between cyclists and vehicles making left turns from Great Ancoats Street into George Leigh Street.

Problem 8: The exit from the city centre via Lever Street is currently three lanes. The plan suggests this will now be two with a possible ASL for cyclists. Cyclists are not afforded adequate protection given they will be granted a head start into a live traffic lane and then immediately 'pinched' by the following vehicles.

Problem 9: Vehicles entering George Leigh Street will block back onto Great Ancoats Street posing a risk of rear end shunts. There is also no safe waiting space for a cyclist in this situation, increasing the risk of serious or fatal injuries if struck.

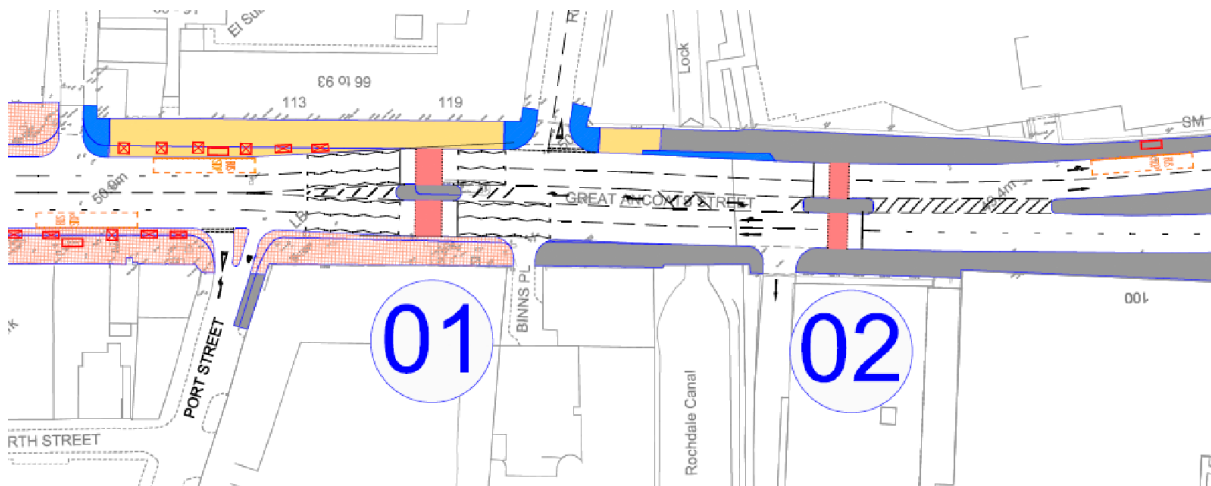
JUNCTION C: Great Ancoats Street, Blossom Street & Newton Street



Problem 10: The lack of dedicated cycling facilities presents a collision risk between cyclists and vehicles making left turns from Great Ancoats Street into Newton Street.

Problem 11: The plan suggests a possible ASL for cyclists on Newton Street. Cyclists are not afforded adequate protection given they will be granted a head start into a live traffic lane and then immediately 'pinched' by the following vehicles.

LINK INCLUDING PEDESTRIAN CROSSING 01 & 02, JUNCTION WITH REDHILL STREET:

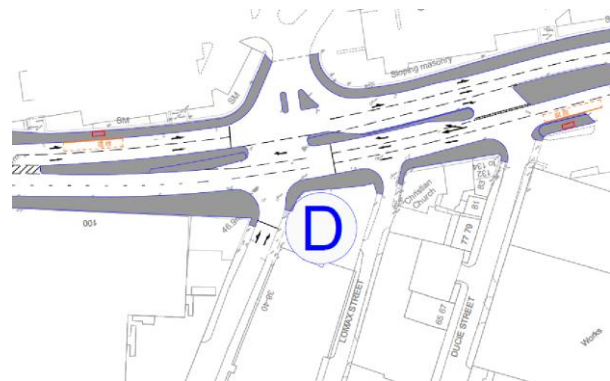


Problem 12: Traffic will be accelerating away from Junction C potentially in excess of the 30 mph speed limit. The presence of a bus stop prior to Crossing 01 could cause sudden lane changes. Any cyclist waiting to turn right into the Port Street contraflow cycle lane is left exposed to this risk and could potentially suffer serious or fatal injuries if struck.

Problem 13: The right turn from Great Ancoats Street into Redhill Street is a well-documented ‘rat run’ for traffic avoiding the sequence of signalised junctions A, B, and C. Oncoming cyclists may be masked by the background ‘clutter’ of the pedestrian crossing and a driver looking for a gap may not notice a cyclist until already committed to the turn, thus increasing the risk of a serious collision.

Problem 14: Pedestrian Crossing 02 has no controlled areas shown.

JUNCTION D: Leystall Street & Great Ancoats Street



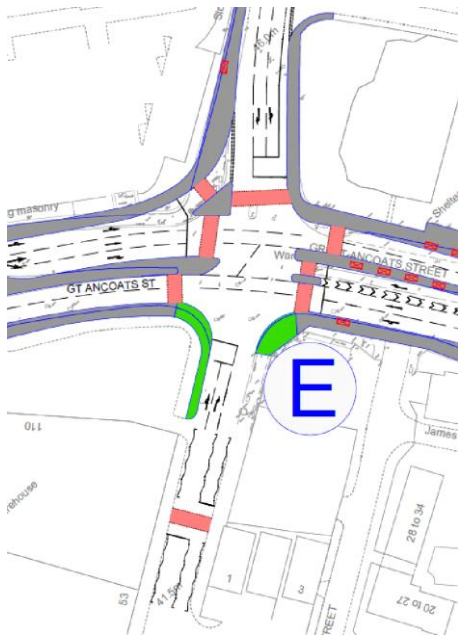
Problem 15: There are no pedestrian crossing facilities shown on any arm of this junction. The current facilities are informal and lack specific pedestrian stages, but the plan implies they may be removed. Given the proximity of two bus stops and the potential redevelopment of the former Central Retail Park as a residential or mixed-use development this junction will need a much more detailed design relevant to the needs of future ambitions.

the following vehicles.

Problem 16: Cyclists are not afforded adequate protection given they will be granted a head start into a live traffic lane and then immediately ‘pinched’ by

Problem 17: The right turn from Great Ancoats Street into Ducie Street remains uncontrolled and poses a risk of collisions as oncoming traffic will be accelerating away from Junction E potentially in excess of the 30 mph speed limit.

JUNCTION E: Old Mill Street, Great Ancoats Street & Old Mill Street



Problem 18: The left turn slip road from Great Ancoats Street into Old Mill Street is superfluous as queueing traffic will obstruct access to it. The intervisibility from this slip road is also poor resulting in drivers having to look over their shoulder whilst turning left. This could result in loss of control collisions, or rear shunts caused by vehicles failing to give way and suddenly braking.

Problem 19: When the slip road is not obstructed vehicles will enter it at high speeds, potentially increasing the risks to cyclists who could be seriously injured or killed in a 'left hook' style collision.

Problem 20: The plan suggests a possible ASL for cyclists on Old Mill Street and Store Street. Cyclists are not afforded adequate protection given they will be granted a head start into a live traffic lane and then immediately 'pinched' by the following vehicles.

Problem 21: The pedestrian crossing on Store Street is not on a pedestrian desire line. Pedestrians will attempt to cross by the junction, causing an increased risk of collisions and potential serious or fatal injuries.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

The main problem with Great Ancoats Street is the excessive number of traffic signals in a short distance causing stop-start congestion and unbalanced flows. This has a negative effect on cycling and makes walking difficult due to staggered crossings to accommodate motorised traffic signal stages.

Solution 1: Rationalisation of junctions will improve traffic flow and reduce the requirement for extensive turn lanes; for example:

- Restricting Oldham Street to buses and cycles only;
- Reconfigure Lever Street to be two-way traffic, providing a low speed entry to the Northern Quarter for general traffic and linking in with a re-designed Stevenson Square public realm scheme;
- Closure of Newton Street and Blossom Street to general traffic (creating modal filters to enable safe cycling between Ancoats and the proposed Northern Quarter cycleway);
- Closure of Jersey Street (modal filter);
- Provision of a pedestrian and cycle 'supercrossing' between Redhill Street and the shopping centre access road to rationalise two separate crossings;
- Provision of a suitable futureproofed junction at Manchester Central Retail Park;
- Prohibiting right turns into Ducie Street;
- Introduction of 'back to back' right turn signal filters to quickly clear turning movements into Store Street and Old Mill Street.

Solution 2: Provision of a safe, segregated cycle route along the Great Ancoats Street corridor enables safe travel from outlying districts such as Strangeways, Collyhurst, Miles Platting, Bradford, Beswick, and Ardwick. This reduces the need to travel into Manchester city centre by car.

Solution 3: Robust enforcement of parking restrictions (potential introduction of Red Routes?) would also improve flow and safety along the corridor. Provision for loading should be factored into the design and provided where appropriate.

Solution 4: To encourage compliance with the frequently ignored 30 mph speed limit, lane widths should be reduced to a maximum of 3.3 metres.

Solution 5: The widening of footways between Blossom Street and Redhill Street is purely to allow provision of tree pits. This widening should not be undertaken, instead a central reservation built and provision of tree pits within that to create a much more effective 'boulevard' concept. Space would still exist for segregated cycle lanes along this length. Conversely, the widening of the central reservation approaching the Manchester Central Retail Park junction should be abandoned and the space saved used for the segregated cycle lanes.

CONCLUSION:

The Great Ancoats Street scheme represents a missed opportunity for Manchester and betrays the vision of the Mayor of Greater Manchester to provide a safe city for cycling and walking. Likewise, the scheme does nothing to address the chronic congestion as a result of this route being part of the critical Manchester and Salford Inner Relief Route. As such, it currently is the case that this scheme is £9m spent to achieve nothing. It helps neither drivers nor cyclists, the pedestrian provision is token, and the overall scheme has not considered the needs of 21st Century Manchester at all.

A re-design of the scheme is therefore imperative before construction starts in January 2020.