



**HOSPITAL STREET, NANTWICH**

**PROPOSALS FOR TRAFFIC REDUCTION AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT  
TO BE INCLUDED IN THE  
CHESHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN  
PROGRAMME**

**HOSPITAL STREET ASSOCIATION**

**November 2004**

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## INTRODUCTION

Hospital Street is a narrow, historic, residential street in the Nantwich Conservation Area. The west end of the street carries no through traffic but the east end of the street has for many years been increasingly subject to very heavy vehicular traffic use which causes severe environmental degradation and creates intolerable living conditions. Until the south end of the Nantwich Bypass loop was constructed there was no alternative route available for the through traffic to take but since the A5301 was opened in Autumn 2002 the Hospital Street Association has been campaigning for the implementation of measures to allow the re-establishment of acceptable environmental conditions compatible with its historic residential status. The negative impact of the current traffic levels on the quality of life in the Street is quite unacceptable both socially and environmentally and it is essential that comprehensive measures to remedy the situation are implemented urgently.

The problems suffered by the east end of Hospital Street are shared by Pratchitt's Row and generally throughout this submission references to Hospital Street should be taken to include Pratchitt's Row where relevant.

## PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT/ROAD SAFETY/CYCLISTS

Hospital Street, which is one of the principal historic thoroughfares of the town, serves as the main pedestrian route between the eastern suburbs and the town centre but in the two way part of the street the combination of narrow pavements (as narrow as 1.0 – 1.1 metres in several places) and very high traffic densities means that the eastern end of the street is an extremely hostile pedestrian environment. A fact that is attested by the tragic death of Mr. and Mrs. Jones in November 2002 killed by a lorry mounting the pavement and the serious accident in March 2004 when a car crossed the pavement and embedded itself in the side of a house, narrowly missing several pedestrians.

An average of 15% of vehicles using the street exceed 30 mph and an average of 77% of vehicles exceed 20 mph. Aside from the constant potential serious road safety threat from the forced close proximity of pedestrians with fast moving vehicles, even the actual experience of walking along the pavement and being buffeted by fast moving high sided vehicles passing within inches is a very unnerving experience for any pedestrian. The problems for pedestrians are often further compounded by the very low kerb upstands along most of the street, which allow delivery vehicles etc. easily to pull onto the pavement when stopping to avoid impeding the traffic flow, but at the same time completely blocking the narrow footway so that parents with pushchairs and the elderly etc. have to walk into the road in order to get past.

Furthermore, Hospital Street is not just a longitudinal route. Because of the many lateral footpaths and residential cul-de-sacs which link with it, many desire-lines cross the line of the street and many pedestrians have no option but to attempt to cross the road despite the fact that it is a daunting experience, particularly for the elderly and those with limited mobility or accompanied by children, and that during the day time it is quite impossible to cross without contravening the Green Cross Code.

Hospital Street is a residential environment and an important pedestrian route. Its pavements should offer a safe and pleasant means of pedestrian access and a place to stop and pass the time of day or just to sit and enjoy oneself, whereas at present they are a very unpleasant and dangerous place to have to negotiate and one in which few would choose to linger. In order to make the east end of Hospital Street a safe, pedestrian compatible environment again it

will be necessary to reduce traffic levels and speeds substantially, widen footpaths, increase kerb upstands and provide appropriate pedestrian crossing points.

As well as being a major general pedestrian route, Hospital Street is the route to and from school for many schoolchildren and so improvements to the pedestrian environment in Hospital Street will significantly help to deliver the government's Safe Routes to School programme in the town.

The two way part of Hospital Street is such an unwelcoming cycling environment that at present generally only brave and experienced cyclists are prepared to risk cycling on the carriageway and the majority of cyclists choose to share the narrow pavements with pedestrians. The road is too narrow to permit cycle lanes to be provided but this does not matter since, if traffic volumes and speed are reduced to levels compatible with the provision of a safe residential and pedestrian environment, the resultant conditions will also create a safe cycling environment in which cyclists will no longer have any need to fear cycling on the carriageway. This will, of course, also further help in the provision of the Safe Routes to School programme.

Any resident or frequent pedestrian user of the street has known for a long time that the doubly fatal accident in 2002 was an accident waiting to happen and the continuing frequency of minor incidents and near misses when heavy vehicles regularly overrun kerbs and mount pavements together with the impossibility of crossing the road safely means that, unless drastic action is taken to improve the situation, further serious accidents can be considered inevitable.

#### CONSERVATION/HERITAGE/TOURISM

Hospital Street extends from Churche's Mansion to the Square and, together with the High Street and Welsh Row, it forms part of the principal historic axis of the town of Nantwich which in medieval times formed part of the main highway from London to Chester and thence to Ireland. Hospital Street lies entirely within the Nantwich Conservation Area and contains many listed buildings, 19 of which are to be found on the two way section of the street which constitutes the eastern third of its overall length. Hospital Street is a key element of the historic fabric of the town and forms an essential part of its heritage.

In terms of tourism strategy Nantwich is often referred to as the jewel in the Borough's crown and within the tourism context the whole length of Hospital Street should be seen as one of principal pedestrian routes, connecting as it does the three Grade 1 listed buildings in the town (Churche's Mansion at the east end of the street, St. Mary's Church up Church Lane towards the west end of the street, and the Crown in High Street).

At present the western third of the street, which benefited from the environmental enhancement measures carried out as part of the town centre pedestrianisation scheme, can be considered to have a standard of streetscape appropriate to its historic importance, whereas the quality of the streetscape of the remainder of the street, which has never benefited from any enhancement measures, leaves much to be desired and this, combined with the traffic related environmental degradation to which the two way section of the street is subject, results in very substandard environmental conditions at the east end of the street entirely inappropriate to one of the principal historic streets of an outstanding Conservation Area. Furthermore, at present the combination of narrow pavements and heavy traffic flows make the east end of Hospital Street extremely unattractive to any visitor walking round the town.

Under the prevailing circumstances Hospital Street, which was and should be one continuous street leading from the eastern edges of the historic town right into the town centre, now has a split personality, with the eastern third of its length being first and foremost a major traffic artery which entirely prevents any appreciation of its character as an historic urban street. Furthermore, the condition of the old buildings which line the street suffers as a result of vibration caused by heavy goods vehicles, soiling caused by traffic generated dust and dirt and contamination by winter gritting salt and their future economic viability is put in jeopardy by traffic blight.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure the preservation of listed buildings and the preservation and enhancement of the character of Conservation Areas but the present heavy levels of vehicular traffic at the east end of the street have a severely negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area and the condition of the listed buildings and fundamental intervention and comprehensive environmental enhancement is urgently needed to remove the traffic blight and to restore the street's historic identity and character for the whole length of the street.

## RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row are residential streets. The two way section of Hospital Street is lined by 41 dwellings; Pratchitt's Row is lined by 24 dwellings. There are a further 64 dwellings in cul-de-sacs etc. opening directly off the two way section of Hospital Street (Mansion Court, Nuthurst Gardens, St. Nicholas Court, Spring Gardens, Bolland's Row, The Gullet, Rigby's Row, Rookery Close), giving a total of 129 dwellings for the two way section of Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row and their cul-de-sacs etc. Of these 129 dwellings, 65 face directly onto Hospital Street or Pratchitt's Row, 54 of which stand on the pavement itself with no buffer zone whatsoever in front and 44 of which have front doors opening directly onto the pavement. The 65 dwellings facing directly onto the street are home to over 120 individual residents, including many elderly and several families with young children.

The living conditions for the occupants of the 65 dwellings with habitable rooms facing directly onto the street are quite intolerable. To have in the order of 10,000 vehicles per day (700 vehicles an hour) passing within 1.2 metres of one's front door at an average speed of 26mph is entirely unacceptable. As well as the invisible air pollution from exhaust fumes, the huge volume of traffic deposits a great deal of dirt and dust which constantly soils the fronts of the buildings and seeps in around window and door openings. Except in the early hours of the morning, all the dwellings in the street are subject to ever present severe noise pollution caused by the traffic. The frequent braking of heavy goods vehicles causes the old buildings to shake and windows to rattle and high sided goods vehicles block out the daylight from first floor as well as ground floor rooms as they pass.

In order to allow a reasonable quality of life to the inhabitants of Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row, it is essential that all heavy goods vehicles and all through traffic should be excluded from the street and that vehicle speeds are not allowed to exceed 20mph.

## COMMUNITY SEVERANCE/SOCIAL EXCLUSION

All urban settlements are made up of a collection of different communities or quarters. Although often the extent of such communities may be imprecise and their boundaries may overlap, each usually has a distinct identity and, in Nantwich, Hospital Street can be seen to form the core of a clearly defined community within the town.

To the south, the boundary of this community is quite distinct from Pall Mall eastward, first because of the separation provided by the Safeway store and its car park and then by a continuous ancient property boundary which is not crossed by any rights of way so that all the side streets to the south, such as Mansion Court, Nuthurst Gardens, St. Nicholas Court, Spring Gardens and Bollands Row, are self-contained cul-de-sacs with no outlet to the south. From Pall Mall westwards, the southern boundary of the Hospital Street community is co-extensive with that of Pillory Street, with both Pall Mall and the Cocoa Yard perhaps tending to relate more to Pillory Street than Hospital Street.

The community boundary to the north is less well defined but can be clearly identified as the Churchyard, Monks Lane and the roadway of North Crofts. To the east, Crewe Road, London Road and Millstone Lane all form the centre lines of their own local communities, but Chancery Buildings at the junction of Crewe Road and London Road probably relates more to Hospital Street than to either of the other two streets.

Altogether therefore the residential community of which Hospital Street is the core can be considered to include, as well as Hospital Street itself, South Crofts, Rookery Close, Rigby's Row, The Gullett, Bowling Green Court, Church Lane, Pratchitt's Row, Bollands Row, Spring Gardens, St. Nicholas Court, Nuthurst Gardens, Mansion Court and Chancery Buildings. This residential community contains about 340 separate households.

For the western two thirds of its length, which is only subject to very light vehicular traffic, Hospital Street can act as the core of the community but, for the eastern third of its length, the intensity of the traffic now means that the street can no longer fulfil this role and actually splits the community apart rather than joining it together.

To overcome the extreme social exclusion and community severance which the current traffic levels impose and to allow the eastern end of the street to regain its role as the central social interface of the community, the present conditions need to be drastically improved so that neighbours can once again pass the time of day on their doorsteps, passers by can stand and chat and unaccompanied children, the elderly and those with limited mobility are able to cross the road safely.

## POLLUTION

### AIR QUALITY

Hospital Street is one of very few locations within the Borough with daily traffic flows of in the order of 20,000 vehicles per day and has one of the highest nitrogen dioxide levels of any residential street in the Borough. The residents of the street are exposed to this pollution both outside their homes when walking along the pavement and inside as well, since their front doors and the windows of habitable rooms open directly on to the street.

In the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council's "Air Quality Review and Assessment" published in 2004 it was reported that the roundabout and A road junction at Churches Mansion, at the east end of Hospital Street, was one of three areas in the Borough where nitrogen dioxide levels, "are either exceeding or are close to the standard." It is acknowledged by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council that the junction has an annual daily average traffic level above 20,000 vehicles. In July 2003 a survey by Cheshire County Council demonstrated that traffic in the two way section of Hospital Street was at a similar level leading to the inference that this residential section of the A534 is equally as potentially hazardous.

Given the confined nature of Hospital Street (typically only 8.5-9.5 metres wide between the opposite faces of buildings) it is not unreasonable to suggest that there is less of a chance for pollutant emissions to disperse. This observation by the Hospital Street Association and the confirmation of traffic levels has led Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council to commence diffusion tube monitoring of nitrogen dioxide levels in the narrowest part of the street as well as at the east end.

In addition to concerns about nitrogen dioxide levels government advisers are now expressing increasing anxiety regarding an associated vehicle emission pollutant - microscopic particles which are referred to as PM10s. For reasons of cost CNBC do not monitor these emissions. Both pollutants can provoke serious respiratory disorders, particularly in elderly people (many Nantwich residents and tourists are in this category) and those with asthma. It is estimated that in the UK nitrogen dioxide and PM10 pollution contributes to several thousand deaths and many more hospital admissions every year.

## DIRT

As well as invisible air pollution, such as nitrogen dioxide and particulates etc., the high volume of traffic generates a great deal of dirt and dust which constantly soils the fronts of the buildings and penetrates inside dwellings around doors and window openings and, although this dirt pollution may not have as serious effects on health as invisible pollution, it is just as dispiriting in quality of life terms.

## NOISE

Almost certainly residents in the Hospital Street Association area are exposed to traffic noise exceeding the World Health Organisation's recommended daytime level of 55 decibels. The effects that noise has on people can vary widely; they include sleep disturbance and annoyance, which can lead to emotional stress. Excessive noise levels can also disrupt communication and affect concentration. The residents of the street are subject to constant severe noise pollution for eighteen hours a day.

## VIBRATION

Heavy goods vehicles cause severe vibration, particularly when braking, which makes the old buildings shake and rattles windows and doors.

## GENERAL

The combined effect of the various kinds of severe pollution from which the street suffers results in serious traffic blight and unacceptably poor living conditions.

## TRAFFIC SURVEY

A traffic survey was carried out by Cheshire County Council between 7.7.03 and 13.7.03 in the two way part of Hospital Street which produced the following results: -

### TRAFFIC VOLUME

The traffic survey showed that the average daily weekday traffic flow was 19641 vehicles and the maximum weekday traffic flow recorded was 21059 vehicles on Friday 11.7.03. The average peak hourly weekday traffic flow, which typically occurred between 17.00 and 18.00, was 1577 vehicles per hour. The maximum

weekday hourly traffic flow recorded was 1649 vehicles between 16.00 and 17.00 on Friday 11.7.03. The overall traffic flow on Saturday (19131 vehicles) was exactly on a par with the weekday levels and even on Sunday a total of almost 15000 vehicles were recorded.

We understand that Cheshire County Council accepts that all through traffic should be signed via the Bypass Loop rather than through the town and that to achieve this it is intended to implement a comprehensive re-signing of the roads around Nantwich.

Systematic observation by residents has established that a large proportion of the traffic using the east end of Hospital Street, including nearly all the heavy goods vehicles, is through traffic rather than local traffic accessing the town centre. Daily traffic flows of in the order of 20,000 vehicles and peak hourly flows in excess of 1500 vehicles are entirely unacceptable for a narrow, historic, residential street. A drastic reduction in traffic volumes is required to achieve reasonable conditions for residents and pedestrians. Only immediately local traffic accessing the town centre should use Hospital Street and no through traffic at all should use the street.

The re-signing exercise together with the reclassification of relevant roads and the implementation of traffic calming and traffic restriction measures to discourage rat running etc. should achieve a really significant reduction in the volume of traffic using Hospital Street.

## HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

The traffic survey showed that the average daily weekday heavy goods vehicle flow was 538 vehicles per day and the maximum weekday heavy goods vehicle flow was 566 vehicles (on Friday 11.7.03). The average peak hourly weekday heavy goods vehicle flow was 54 vehicles per hour and the maximum hourly weekday heavy goods vehicle flow was 55 vehicles between 12.00 and 13.00 on Thursday 10.7.03. 300 heavy goods vehicles were recorded on Saturday 12.7.03 and almost 200 heavy goods vehicles were even recorded on Sunday 13.7.03.

Hardly any goods vehicles need to pass along Hospital Street since Safeways, Aldi and Laura Ashley can all be accessed via Station Road and Wellington Road/Water Lode. The only goods vehicles which need to use Hospital Street are those servicing shops and pubs etc. in Pillory Street, Hospital Street, Church Lane and The Gullet and, since most shops in Hospital Street and Pillory Street are small, low turnover, speciality shops, the volume and frequency of their deliveries are very modest. Furthermore, any heavy goods vehicles which do need to go round the Pillory Street/Hospital Street one way system should enter via Wellington Road/Water Lode and exit via Station Road and Wellington Road/Water Lode rather than along the east end of Hospital Street.

Although there has been a reduction in the number of goods vehicles using the street since the south end of the town centre bypass opened, over 50 goods vehicles per hour and over 500 goods vehicles per day are still far above what is acceptable or necessary. If one carried out a census of all goods vehicles, we expect that one would find that at most about 5 vehicles per hour and 50 per day had a legitimate necessity to pass along Hospital Street.

## VEHICLE SPEED

The traffic survey showed that typically about 15% of vehicles, and sometimes more, exceed 30mph which, bearing in mind the high volume of traffic, can mean more than 3000 vehicles per day. As one would expect, speed increases when traffic intensity decreases and on Sunday, the quietest day, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile vehicle was recorded as travelling at 31mph and the average vehicle speed was 27mph, whereas the overall average speed recorded was 26mph. On average 77% of vehicles were travelling faster than 20mph and this figure rose to 89% on Sunday.

At the Nantwich Town Council meeting on 27.10.03 Alan Stilwell, the County Engineer, said himself that vehicular speeds should not exceed 20mph in any residential street and average speeds of 26mph are certainly quite unacceptable for a narrow residential street in a Conservation Area. Government research has shown that, whereas at 30mph 20% of people hit by vehicles die, at 20mph only 2.5% of people die. No vehicle should be travelling faster than 20mph in a narrow residential street such as Hospital Street.

## HIGHWAY WIDTH

At its narrowest point, between No.106 and No.89 Hospital Street, the overall width of the two way part of Hospital Street is only 8.5 metres wide and typically elsewhere the overall width is only in the range of 9.5-10 metres wide. In many places the pavements are only 1-1.1 metres wide, whereas the carriageway is never less than 5.75 metres wide and is generally always in excess of 6 metres wide. Bearing in mind that this is a residential street lined with listed buildings in a Conservation Area with most of the houses having front doors and windows of habitable rooms opening directly onto the pavement and is also a major pedestrian route between the eastern suburbs and the town centre, the relative proportion of the overall road width devoted to pedestrians compared to that devoted to vehicles is unfairly balanced in favour of vehicular traffic.

When the present kerb lines became established conflict between pedestrians and vehicles was not an issue and even as recently as fifty years ago there was not a problem, since traffic was so light that one could safely step out onto the carriageway if necessary. Furthermore, since there were no parking restrictions, the extra carriageway width had the benefit of allowing kerbside parking without obstructing the traffic flow. But now that there are double yellow lines for the whole length of the street, there is no benefit in the carriageway being any wider than a minimum two lane width. Under the circumstances, to restore a reasonable compromise between pedestrian and vehicular use, the carriageway width will need to be reduced to a constant width of 5.5 metres, which will mean that generally the pavements can be at least 1.8 metres wide, although at the narrowest point they will still not be more than 1.5 metres wide.

## EAST-WEST CROSS TOWN LINKS

Pratchitt's Row, Station Road and the east end of Hospital Street and Beam Street, Oat Market/Swine Market and the west end of High Street provide the only two east-west cross town links for vehicular traffic. The exclusion of all through traffic from the town will certainly significantly reduce the volume of traffic in Hospital Street and presumably also achieve a considerable reduction of the volume of traffic in Beam Street as well and, once all through traffic has been excluded, the proportion of the residual local town centre access traffic which should use each corridor should reflect the relative capability and suitability of each corridor to carry traffic. In this respect the three principal relevant areas of

consideration are the residential density, overall road width and location relative to town centre facilities etc.

Hospital Street is a residential street but Beam Street is not. Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row contain a total of 65 dwellings facing the street, of which 44 have front doors opening directly onto the pavement. By contrast, excluding the alms houses and King Place at the east end which are set well back from the road on self contained sites and, in the case of King Place, separated from it by a substantial raised planting bed, in Beam Street, Oat Market/Swine Market and the west end of High Street there are no more than 13 dwellings in total, only 8 of which appear to be currently occupied. Of these dwellings 3 are licensed premises, 9 are first or second floor flats and only one is a conventional house with a front door on the pavement.

The overall width of Beam Street between the front walls of opposite buildings at its narrowest point at the west end is 10.35 metres wide but elsewhere it is never less than 12 metres wide, whereas the overall width of Hospital Street at its narrowest point is only 8.5 metres wide and generally elsewhere it is typically only about 9.5-10 metres wide. In order to achieve a reasonable compromise between the relative widths allocated to pedestrians and vehicles the overall width of the Hospital Street carriageway cannot be wider than 5.5 metres, whereas by the same principles the width of the Beam Street carriageway can remain as it is at present, i.e. wider than 6.5 metres even at its narrowest point.

Beam Street, Swine Market, Oat Market and High Street have many town centre shops which need to receive frequent large scale deliveries and Beam Street also provides the means of access for deliveries to much of the pedestrianised town centre. Beam Street is a bus route and the bus station, the fire station and the lorry park are also all located on Beam Street so that inevitably large numbers of heavy goods vehicles frequently have to use the street on a regular basis, whereas hardly any heavy goods vehicles need to use Hospital Street. Similarly, the fact that the library, civic hall, police station, bus station and health centre (existing and proposed) and one of the town's principal car parks are all located on Beam Street inevitably means that a large number of vehicles going to these facilities need to pass along Beam Street, whereas the only comparable facilities in Hospital Street are two relatively small minor car parks.

The Hospital Street Association recognises that the east end of Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row cannot be completely pedestrianised and must continue to serve in their role as a local cross town access route, but on all the above grounds the Association considers that, once all through traffic has been excluded, Beam Street ought to carry a greater proportion of the residual local cross town centre access traffic than Hospital Street and the majority of the residual local cross town centre heavy goods vehicle access traffic.

## PROPOSALS

1. Direction Signing, Road Classification and Designation and Speed Limits in and around Nantwich

We want the review of Direction Signing and Road Classification and Designation to be completed as a matter of urgency and we want all the recommendations in the Nantwich Access and Traffic Strategy Working Party submission to the County Engineer to be implemented as soon as possible including: -

- a) The downgrading of Wellington Road, Water Lode, Beam Street, Millstone Lane, Barony Road, the Kingsley Fields Relief Road, Chester Road, Acton, Welsh Row and Crewe Road, London Road and Middlewich Road within the bypass loop, from A road to C road status (coloured yellow on OS maps).
- b) The complete declassification of Hospital Street, Pratchitt's Row and Station Road so that they become unclassified local access roads only.
- c) Amendments to all relevant direction signs so that all through traffic is signed along the bypass loop only and no through traffic is signed along Hospital Street, Pratchitt's Row or Station Road.

## 2. Weight Restriction

The only goods vehicles which need to travel along Hospital Street are those servicing immediately local premises. The only local premises which receive frequent deliveries from large lorries are Safeway and Aldi and lorries servicing those premises should always travel via Wellington Road or Water Lode and Station Road and should not need to enter Hospital Street at all. The occasional heavy goods vehicles which need to go round the Pillory Street/Hospital Street one way system should also enter via Wellington Road/Water Lode and exit via Station Road rather than along the east end of Hospital Street. Generally, no vehicles larger than delivery vans, removal vans, refuse disposal vehicles, fire engines, brewers' drays etc. should need to travel along the east end of Hospital Street.

We want a 7.5 tonne weight restriction except for access to be introduced as soon as possible. The weight restriction should apply to Mill Street, Barker Street, Love Lane, Pillory Street, Station Road, Pratchitt's Row, Church Lane, the Gullet and the whole of Hospital Street. Signs will be required on the London Road roundabout at the east end of Hospital Street and on the Water Lode roundabout at the end of Station Road. Strictly speaking, signs may also be required at the ends of Mill Street and Pillory Street, although, in practice, these streets are so narrow, tortuous and indirect that few HGV drivers would choose to enter them anyway.

We accept that a weight restriction cannot be introduced until the relevant direction signs have been altered, but we want the direction signs to be changed as soon as possible and all necessary preparatory work, including consultation procedures etc., to be got underway as a matter of urgency in the meantime so that as soon as the direction signs are changed the weight restriction can be implemented immediately.

## 3. 20mph Zone

No traffic using Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row should be travelling at more than 20mph. We want a 20mph zone to be created as soon as possible. The minimum extent of the zone must include Mill Street, Barker Street, Love Lane, Pillory Street, Church Lane, The Gullet, the whole of Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row, in which case signs at the entrance to the zone would be required on the Water Lode at the head of Mill Street and at the entrance to the Love Lane car park, on the Water Lode roundabout at the head of Pillory Street, on Pratchitt's Row immediately to the north of The Beeches junction, and on the London Road roundabout at the east end of Hospital Street. However, it may be considered preferable to extend the 20mph zone to include Station Road and The Beeches (and cul-de-sacs off), on none of which should traffic travel at more than 20mph.

#### 4. Roundabouts

At present the carriageway surface area at the London Road and Crewe Road End roundabouts is so generous that two lanes of traffic can approach both roundabouts from all directions (except the approach to the Crewe Road roundabout from Millstone Lane) and the westbound traffic on London Road can continue straight on down Hospital Street without a pause if the road is clear. Once the outcome of the review of road signing and classification has been implemented, both roundabouts and their immediate approaches at the west ends of both Crewe Road and London Road need complete reconstruction to reduce the carriageway surface area, restrict traffic flow and provide traffic calming. All entries and exits to the roundabouts should be reduced to the absolute minimum necessary single lane width, vehicles should have to confront the roundabouts radially rather than tangentially and the geometry of the roundabouts should be made so tight that heavy goods vehicles have to slow to a virtual halt before they can negotiate them successfully. The traffic calming effect should be reinforced by distinctive surface treatment of the carriageway etc. A pedestrian crossing should be provided across the foot of Crewe Road. The extra space released by the reduction in carriageway area should be used for tree planting, to widen pavements for pedestrians and possibly to create car parking bays for local residents who habitually park on the pavement at present.

#### 5. Reconstruction of Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row Pavements and Carriageway and Associated Environmental Improvements

The whole of the two way part of Hospital Street, Pratchitt's Row and the junction between them needs to be completely reconstructed and relandscaped, including the adjustment of surface levels, realignment of kerbs, alterations to drainage channels and gulley positions etc. The design and specification of the work must take account of the street's Conservation Area status and the need to achieve real environmental improvement. The work should include the following aspects: -

##### a) Lowering of Surface Levels

Repeated application of layers of tarmac without full prior removal of previous layers has resulted in carriageway levels progressively rising over the past 50 years, and as a consequence, current pavement kerb upstands are typically in the range of only 25-75mm high which makes it far too easy for vehicles to overrun. At the same time, the internal ground floor levels of many of the dwellings on the street are at or even below pavement level so that there is no scope for raising the pavements. To allow pavements to be widened while maintaining adequate cross fall away from buildings and to allow the height of kerb upstands to be increased to a minimum of 100mm, finished carriageway levels must therefore be lowered generally by in the order of 100mm at the very least.

##### b) Widening of Pavements and Reduction in Carriageway Width

The overall width of the two way part of Hospital Street between the faces of the buildings is typically about 9500mm wide but at the narrowest point (between Nos. 106 and 89) it is only 8500mm wide. Existing pavement widths are typically in the range from 1000-1500mm wide and the existing carriageway width typically varies in the range from 6500-7000mm wide. To achieve a reasonable balance between the width available for pedestrians and for vehicles, the carriageway width for the whole of Hospital Street should be

reduced to 5500mm only, which will allow pavement widths to be increased so that they are never less than 1800mm wide and preferably 2000mm wide, except at the one narrowest pinch point where pavement widths will regrettably have to reduce to no more than 1500mm either side. The carriageway width should also be reduced and pavements widened in Pratchitt's Row as well and the junction between Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row should be redesigned to minimise the carriageway surface area and calm traffic.

c) Pedestrian Crossings

To assist pedestrians to cross safely and to calm traffic speed 5 raised platform pedestrian crossings should be provided across Hospital Street, at the extreme east end of the street, at the east end of the one way part and at an approximately midway intermediate point, and across the north end of Pratchitt's Row and across the south end of the Gullet.

d) One Way Part of Hospital Street

The comprehensive town centre relandscaping which was carried out in the 1980's peters out halfway down the one way part of Hospital Street and, although complete reconstruction may possibly not be necessary, there is certainly scope for considerable improvement to the layout and landscaping of the eastern half of the one way part of the street. Desirable improvements to this part of the street should be dealt with simultaneously with that of the two way part to restore the continuity of the whole street and achieve a uniformly high quality of consistent landscaping treatment for its entire length.

e) Materials

In accordance with English Heritage advice, high quality traditional materials appropriate to a Conservation Area, such as sandstone or granite kerbs and setts, clay pavements and real York stone, or good quality artificial stone flags, should be used.

f) Street Lighting

Replacement of existing main road light columns in Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row with sympathetic smaller scale amenity light fittings appropriate to a Conservation Area, similar to those currently used at the west end of Hospital Street, Churchyardside etc.

## PROGRAMME

It has been suggested that any decisions about the treatment of Hospital Street must be postponed until a town centre access and traffic strategy study has been undertaken for the whole town but that because of limited staff resources such a study cannot be carried out until 2005. However, we would point out that we are not making any unreasonable demands, such as asking for the complete closure of Hospital Street or for the total exclusion of all local town centre access traffic. We understand that the County Council already accepts that all through traffic should be signed via the bypass loop and we consider that the case in favour of the declassification of Hospital Street and the introduction of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction and a 20mph speed limit is so fundamental and overwhelming that there is no reason why a decision in principle to approve these proposals should not be taken immediately.

Furthermore, the outcome of any study undertaken in 2005 will be too late to influence the content of the 2006-11 Local Transport Plan submission.

The 2003 traffic survey highlights the intensity of the traffic blight from which Hospital Street suffers and how intolerable conditions are for residents and pedestrians and emphatically shows that the need to introduce a 20mph zone and 7.5 tonne weight restriction, together with associated measures to calm and restrict traffic flow, is desperately urgent.

## PROPOSED PROGRAMME

### 2005

Agreement in principle to the need for a 7.5 tonne weight restriction except for access and carrying out of any necessary consultation procedures etc.

Agreement in principle to the need for a 20mph zone and carrying out of any necessary consultation procedures etc.

Detailed planning, design and specification of comprehensive Resigning and Road Redesignation and Reclassification proposals.

Initial planning and design of comprehensive traffic restriction and calming measures, environmental improvements etc.

### 2006

Full implementation of comprehensive Resigning and Road Redesignation and Reclassification proposals.

Implementation of a 7.5 tonne except for access weight restriction.

Detailed design and specification of comprehensive traffic restriction and calming measures, environmental improvements etc.

### 2007

Implementation of a 20mph zone.

Implementation of comprehensive traffic restriction and calming measures, environmental improvements etc.

## LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

These traffic reduction and environmental improvement proposals will help realise the following proposed LTP priorities and activities: -

- Meeting local aspirations
- Providing safer roads
- Supporting town centre improvements
- Improving air quality
- Delivering accessibility
- Providing a safer route to schools
- Improving overall quality of life
- Improving public spaces and streets
- Reducing noise levels

Improving the environment  
Making it easier to travel by foot  
Improving facilities for cyclists  
Reducing social exclusion  
Achieving healthy communities  
Neighbourhood renewal and regeneration

The proposals will help overcome the severe traffic generated environmental deprivation, social exclusion and community severance from which Hospital Street suffers and make the street accessible once again as an urban space to pedestrians, cyclists, residents, children, the elderly, the disabled, visitors and the local community generally.

The LTP submission should include sufficient funds to allow all the following work to be carried out in 2006 and 2007: -

2006

Implementation of the whole of the comprehensive resigning project

Detail design and specification work on the comprehensive traffic restriction and calming measures and environmental improvement work

2007

Implementation of all the comprehensive traffic restriction and calming measures and environmental improvement works for Crewe Road End and London Road roundabouts, the eastern two thirds of Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row (approximately 800 linear metres of highway in total), including: -

Complete reconstruction of carriageway and pavements of Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row and the junction between them

Complete reconstruction of Crewe Road End and London Road roundabouts

Complete replacement of street lighting

Use of high quality materials appropriate to the Conservation Area throughout

## SUMMARY

Hospital Street is a narrow, historic, residential street in the Nantwich Conservation Area which is, however, subject to some of the highest levels of traffic flow of any of the roads in the Borough, causing many problems relating to road safety, pollution, community severance, social exclusion, environmental degradation etc. and as a result the street suffers severe traffic blight and conditions for residents and pedestrians have become quite intolerable.

To restore an acceptable quality of life to the street, the Hospital Street Association wants the following action to be taken as a matter of urgency: -

Implementation of the recommendations of the Nantwich Access and Traffic Strategy Working Party concerning Direction Signing, Road Classification and Designation and Speed Limits in and around Nantwich, to ensure exclusion of all through traffic.

Introduction of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction.

Introduction of a 20mph zone with associated traffic calming.

Complete redesign and reconstruction of the Hospital Street and Pratchitt's Row highways, including the Crewe Road End and London Road roundabouts.

Comprehensive environmental improvements.

Provision of pedestrian crossings.

Widening of footways, reduction in carriageway widths and lowering of carriageway levels.