

# OXFORD STREET PADDINGTON

## The Village High Street as a Place for People



Prepared by The Paddington Society  
July 2023

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## Background

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The high street of Paddington is quite unique having emerged along the line of an original Aboriginal track, initially offering essential goods and services for early settlers and expanding into

a retail high street during the eras of the horse drawn, steam and electric trams as Paddington developed over the latter part of the 19th century. Today it attracts and serves many locals who prefer to shop in this traditional environment as it provides for most essential needs including hardware, supermarkets, chemists, news agencies, cafes and the like, as well as being home to schools, churches, day care and markets. These facilities occur across both sides of the street, interdependent upon each other to stimulate life and activity.

The high street is gradually recovering from the impact of Westfield Bondi Junction and the restrictions of Covid. Despite the access limitations imposed by the clearway the number of empty shops is decreasing and the centre is looking toward a revival.

It is necessary now to promote the high street as a PLACE, to make it safer and more accessible for pedestrians, to promote business activity and to provide a higher level of amenity for people on foot, once they leave their house or their vehicle, be it car, bus or bike. To quote Sir Terry Farrell, Britain's eminent urbanist "walking and the world of the pedestrian represent the raison d'être of cities."

## Objective

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It is timely that we adopt a changed attitude to our village centre. Until now the driving force behind the use of the centre has been the movement of vehicular traffic to and from locations outside the village itself - the movement of traffic from A to B. The proposal for a segregated cycleway only reinforces this through-way approach and will cement it in place for some time to come unless changes are put in place. It is now imperative that, in accordance with TfNSW's own policy document, priority is given to the village as a PLACE, with top priority being given to pedestrians.

The Paddington Society proposal seeks to balance the use of Oxford Street as an important village centre, reinforcing its resident pedestrian usage and fostering the growth of commercial activity while maintaining cyclist, public transport and traffic movement at acceptable and safe levels.

## Transport for NSW Proposal

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To our knowledge the current proposal being developed by TfNSW will fail to do this.

The TfNSW proposal, to insert a segregated two-way cycleway along the southern edge of Oxford Street will have a number of negative impacts. It is our contention that the proposed cycleway will impose a permanent physical barrier along the southern edge of Oxford Street, a barrier which will discourage pedestrian connectivity between north and south and further segregate activities on the north side from those on the south. The contra flow element of a multi-directional cycleway will also represent a safety hazard for pedestrians and introduce an uncertainty challenging conventional behaviour patterns. Unlike the clearway, which, unacceptable as it is, only restricts parking and thus access to business over a period of several hours per day, the proposed bikeway will impose a permanent physical barrier and loss of carparking, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week with significant potential to inhibit growth of the centre for the community. Added to this, the emergence of e-bikes, a sensible option for travel through Sydney's difficult terrain, increases the danger in the high street, to relocate pedestrians as e-bikes travel at a constant speed without regulation, along a two way path.

Negative impacts will include:

- Create an additional barrier to cross village pedestrian movement
- Introduce a median and multi directional bike traffic to be negotiated
- Encourage bicycle user speed within the segregated zone
- Allow motor vehicles to travel faster without the encumbrance of cyclists
- Eliminate/reduce essential carparking along the south edge, required to support shoppers and businesses
- Discourage businesses on the southern side including market stall holders
- Eliminate the scope for footpath widening on the sunny south side
- Complicate bus movements and pedestrian waiting areas at bus stops
- Impaired accessibility to bus stops
- Minimize the scope for introduction of street trees to reduce heat island effect
- Limit resident vehicle access to South Paddington by prohibiting right hand turns for east bound vehicles.

From our observations the major use of Oxford Street by cyclists is by commuter cyclists, those travelling from locations to the east of Paddington to destinations in the City or elsewhere, and vice versa. These cyclists travel at speed and are often inclined to disobey traffic rules. The increasing use of e-bikes only promotes this trend. Our understanding is that commuters are likely to continue this form of road usage and not use a segregated bike lane. This can be witnessed by observing other bike lanes currently in operation in the City.

So the question is: who will use this bike lane when constructed.

Is it the commuter, is it the recreational cyclist, or is it the resident cyclist? Paddington, both north and south, has a well developed and signposted internal bike path system using local roads and laneways. It is to be expected that local resident cyclists will use this network in order to arrive at Oxford Street for the purpose of shopping or visiting other activities.

What residential cyclists need are safe and secure parking facilities to leave their bikes and go about their business on foot. The remaining categories of recreational cyclists are most likely to be seen on weekends. We ask is there any research into the demand for this cyclist category in Paddington?

## The Paddington Society Proposal

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Our proposal seeks to balance the use of road space and to re-establish Paddington high street as a vibrant, people friendly community centre.

Central to this proposal is the introduction and enforcement of a permanent 30kph speed limit between Paddington Town Hall and Queen Street (and ultimately extending to Taylor Square and on to the City). Such a reduced speed limit will allow for compatibility between all forms of road use vehicles, eliminating the speed differential that is the cause behind many traffic accidents. This should be the overall objective for the city and metropolitan area if we are to properly address road accidents and deaths and reduce road tolls by 50% by 2030, as agreed by both State and Federal governments. The 2020 UN Stockholm Declaration on road safety called for a 30kph maximum speed limit on roads where motor vehicles mix with pedestrians and cyclists. It is well known that an adult hit by a car at 30kph has a 90% chance of survival, whereas at 50kph the chance of survival is reduced to 20%.

The Paddington Society proposal calls for two traffic lanes in each direction, the left hand inner lane in each direction being a shared lane between cyclists, buses and cars. The existing bus lane/clear way lane is to be eliminated to allow for footpath widening at key locations, pocketed carparking zones, and bus bays at all bus stops. The indented bus bays will ensure that cyclists and drivers can pass without merging into the outer lane. The shared lane will need to be strongly labeled as a shared lane.

The road allocation is proposed to be:

- Footpaths 3.0 metres
- Footpath extensions 2.5 metres
- Carparking pockets 2.5 metres
- Bus bays 3.0 metres
- Shared Lanes 3.5 metres
- Travel Lanes 3.0 metres
- Median Strip 1.0 metre (variable)

It is proposed that existing pedestrian traffic lights be relocated to the intersections with William and Elizabeth Streets, with a new set of traffic lights introduced at Newcombe Street to allow access to the supermarket and basement carpark. A further set of pedestrian traffic lights is proposed to be introduced further east of Elizabeth Street. At intersections traffic lights will allow for controlled pedestrian crossing of Oxford Street at each side of the lights. The Jersey Road and Oatley Road traffic control configurations will remain as existing.

Footpath widenings at key locations will allow for greater pedestrian amenity in the centre including the planting of street trees for shade, outdoor dining associated with cafes and

restaurants, casual seating to enhance social interaction and stay duration, as well as bicycle parking stations to serve the cycling community. Footpath widenings between intersections will allow for informal pedestrian crossings over a shorter crossing distance with pedestrian refuges in the median.

Landscaping for a more sustainable environment will be possible including low level planting and a consistent treatment of street trees in footpath widenings to provide visual enclosure and reduce the heat Island effect.

The end result of this proposal will be a more homogenous and people friendly centre which will foster retail and commercial success and improve Paddington as a village.

## Principles

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The following principles are proposed to achieve an integrated centre accommodating all users.

### Pedestrians

Give pedestrians, and particularly resident pedestrians, priority in accordance with TfNSW policy and encourage the double-sided use of the village centre.

- Widen footpaths on both sides at key locations to provide outdoor dining, street trees, bicycle parking and other facilities
- Ensure sunny side of street is available for pedestrian activity to reinforce retail businesses
- Reduce road crossing kerb to kerb distance for pedestrians
- Relocate mid-block pedestrian traffic light crossings to link both sides of village
- Allow for casual pedestrian crossings with median refuges between traffic lights
- Buffer pedestrians from moving cars by parked cars and landscaping
- Avoid unexpected pedestrian confusion of two way bikeway

### Cycling

Encourage community and commuter cycling with appropriate village centre facilities

- Allow for cycling on Oxford Street in low speed 30kph environment on left hand inner shared lanes
- Provide for shared low speed use of internal left hand lanes in both directions
- Encourage the use of existing neighborhood cycling networks for community cyclist access to Oxford Street
- Provide bicycle parking facilities on widened footpaths to link with neighborhood cycling network
- Require cyclists to obey traffic laws throughout the centre
- Allow for dedicated cycleways outside village centre

## **Public Transport**

Encourage safe use of public transport.

- Eliminate ineffective and unsafe narrow bus lanes
- Provide bus pull over bays at passenger stops allowing for pedestrian access and vehicle/bicycle passing movements in shared lane
- Maintain and delineate left hand internal lane in each direction as shared 30kph lane between bicycles, buses and cars
- Ensure bus bays are located to best serve community and businesses

## **Vehicles**

Reduce the detrimental environmental impact of higher speeds whilst allowing safe passage of all vehicles through the village centre.

- Eliminate ineffective clear ways on both sides of the street
- Provide for two lanes of movement each way with shared use of the left hand internal lane
- Introduce and enforce 30kph speed limit throughout the centre
- Relocate traffic lights to align with William Street and Elizabeth Street intersections to allow for controlled pedestrian, cycle, bus and car movements
- Maintain pocketed car parking and service vehicle parking in key locations
- Allow for emergency vehicle access
- Maintain right hand turns into adjacent residential precincts in South Paddington.

## **Business**

Promote the growth of local businesses by providing a thriving pedestrian environment to both north and south sides of Oxford Street.

- Ensure easy access is available to both north and south between businesses, shops, schools, churches and day care facilities.
- Provide for seating, landscaping and other outdoor amenities to encourage social gatherings and extended stays
- Allow for outdoor dining associated with restaurants and cafes
- Provide a combination of sunny and shady environments to encourage pedestrian use of the centre as a place of well-being
- Eliminate clearways on both sides of the street, facilitating servicing and deliveries.

## Sustainability

Introduce sustainability measures to ensure the future environment of the village.

- Introduce street tree planting at select locations
- Introduce mid-block informal pedestrian crossing points to link both sides of village and improve business potential
- Reduce heat island and carbon emission effect by introducing tree planting in widened footpaths
- Reduce car emissions by lower speed through village centre to reduce carbon and improve air quality
- Improve acoustic environment through lower speeds
- Provide for community amenity on widened footpaths
- Enforce reduced speed limit to decrease accidents

## Implementation

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This proposal will require the owners of the Village High Street, Woollahra Council, City of Sydney Council and Transport for NSW to work together with the local community, with the common objective of the future liveability and viability of the village. The proposal could be considered to be a 'model' when redesigning road infrastructure to encourage use by commuter cyclists, where the road being redesigned also serves as a village 'High Street'.

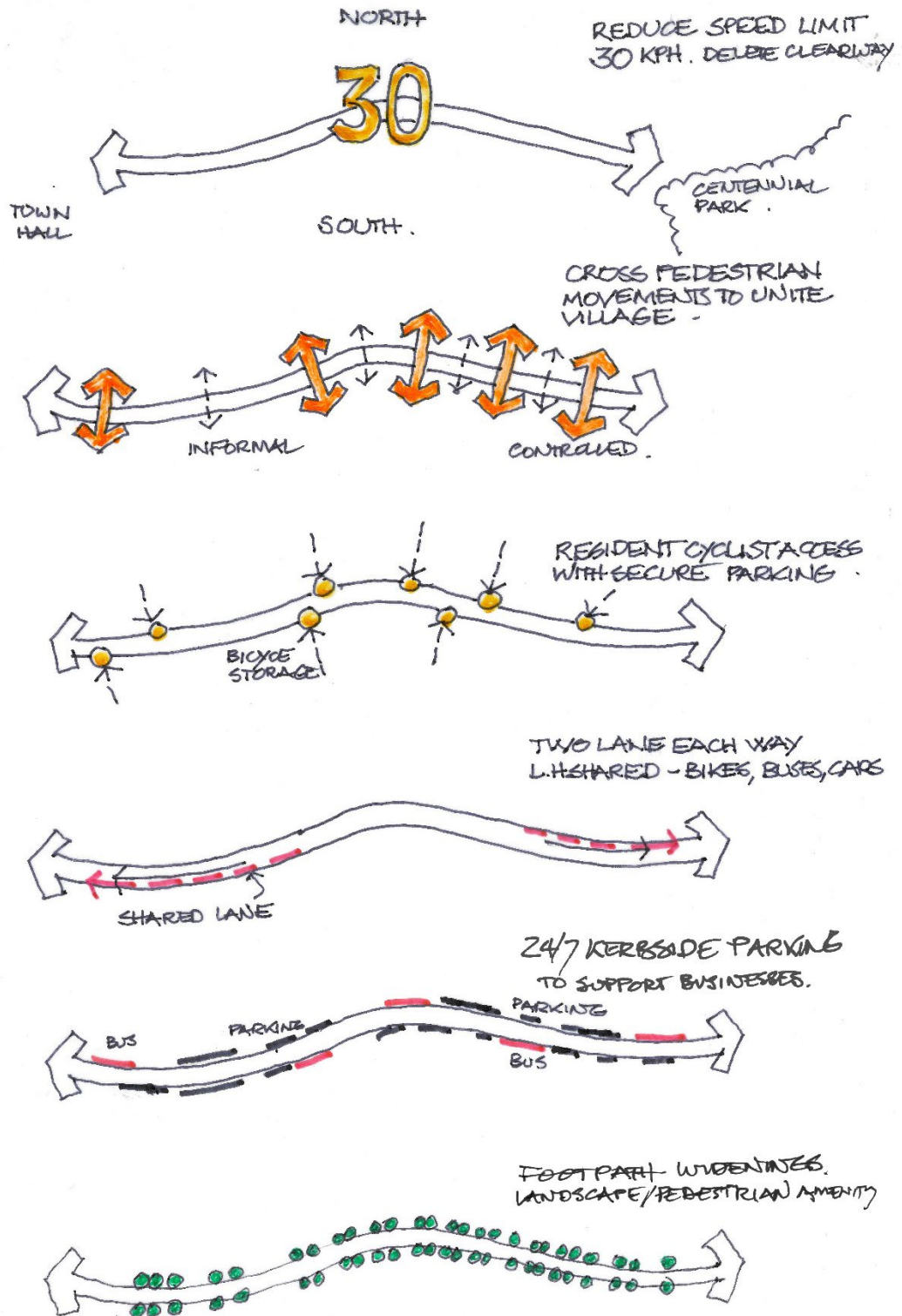
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Footnote: The Paddington Society strongly supports the concept of active transport and refers the reader to our March 2013 proposal for Oxford Street, Paddington "Proposal to Redesign a Thoroughfare Consistent with Paddington as a Village", prepared in collaboration with BIKEast, a joint proposal which promotes the development of shared traffic lanes for bicycles, buses and cars.



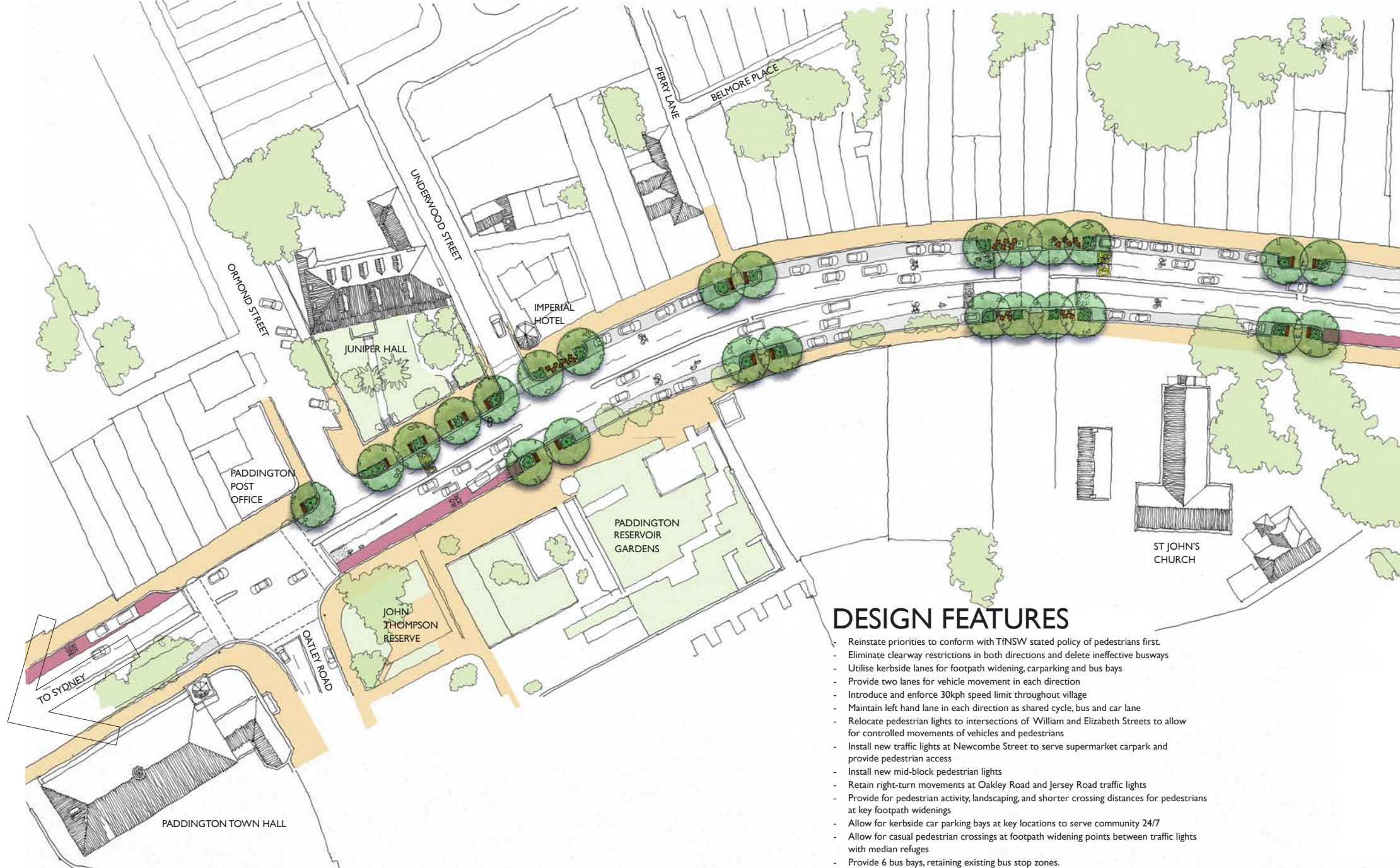
## Principles

### OXFORD STREET PADDINGTON – the Village as a Place for People









## DESIGN FEATURES

- Reinststate priorities to conform with TfNSW stated policy of pedestrians first.
- Eliminate clearway restrictions in both directions and delete ineffective busways
- Utilise kerbside lanes for footpath widening, carparking and bus bays
- Provide two lanes for vehicle movement in each direction
- Introduce and enforce 30kph speed limit throughout village
- Maintain left hand lane in each direction as shared cycle, bus and car lane
- Relocate pedestrian lights to intersections of William and Elizabeth Streets to allow for controlled movements of vehicles and pedestrians
- Install new traffic lights at Newcombe Street to serve supermarket carpark and provide pedestrian access
- Install new mid-block pedestrian lights
- Retain right-turn movements at Oakley Road and Jersey Road traffic lights
- Provide for pedestrian activity, landscaping, and shorter crossing distances for pedestrians at key footpath widenings
- Allow for kerbside car parking bays at key locations to serve community 24/7
- Allow for casual pedestrian crossings at footpath widening points between traffic lights with median refuges
- Provide 6 bus bays, retaining existing bus stop zones.
- Promote the growth of local businesses through 24/7 parking and enhanced pedestrian conditions
- Provide bicycle parking facilities on widened footpaths
- Maximize use of sunny side of street for outdoor dining associated with restaurants and cafes
- Provide for seating, bike facilities, outdoor dining on widened footpaths.
- Introduce street tree planting in footpath widened zones to provide shade and reduce heat Island effect
- Enforce reduced speed limit and reduce car emissions.

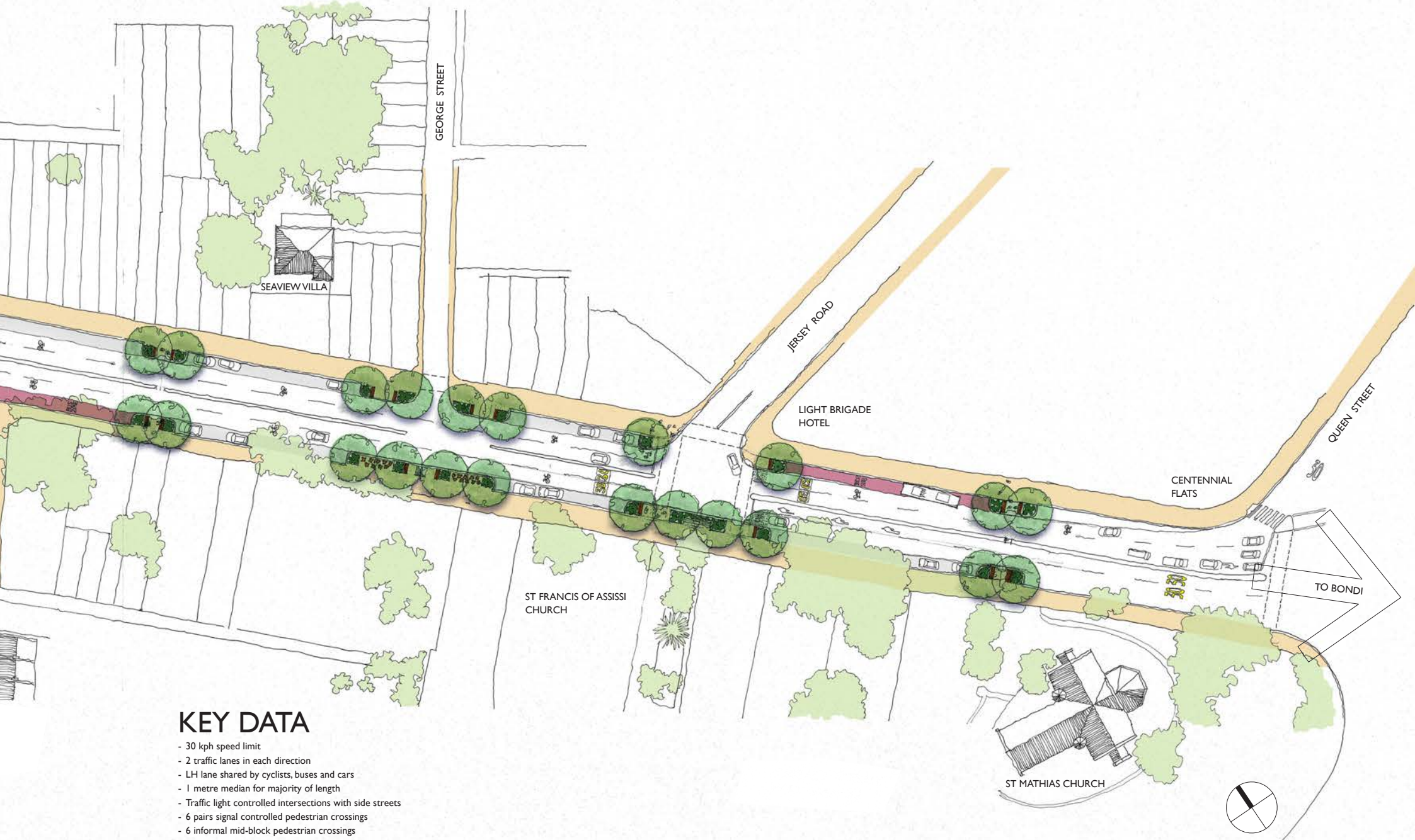




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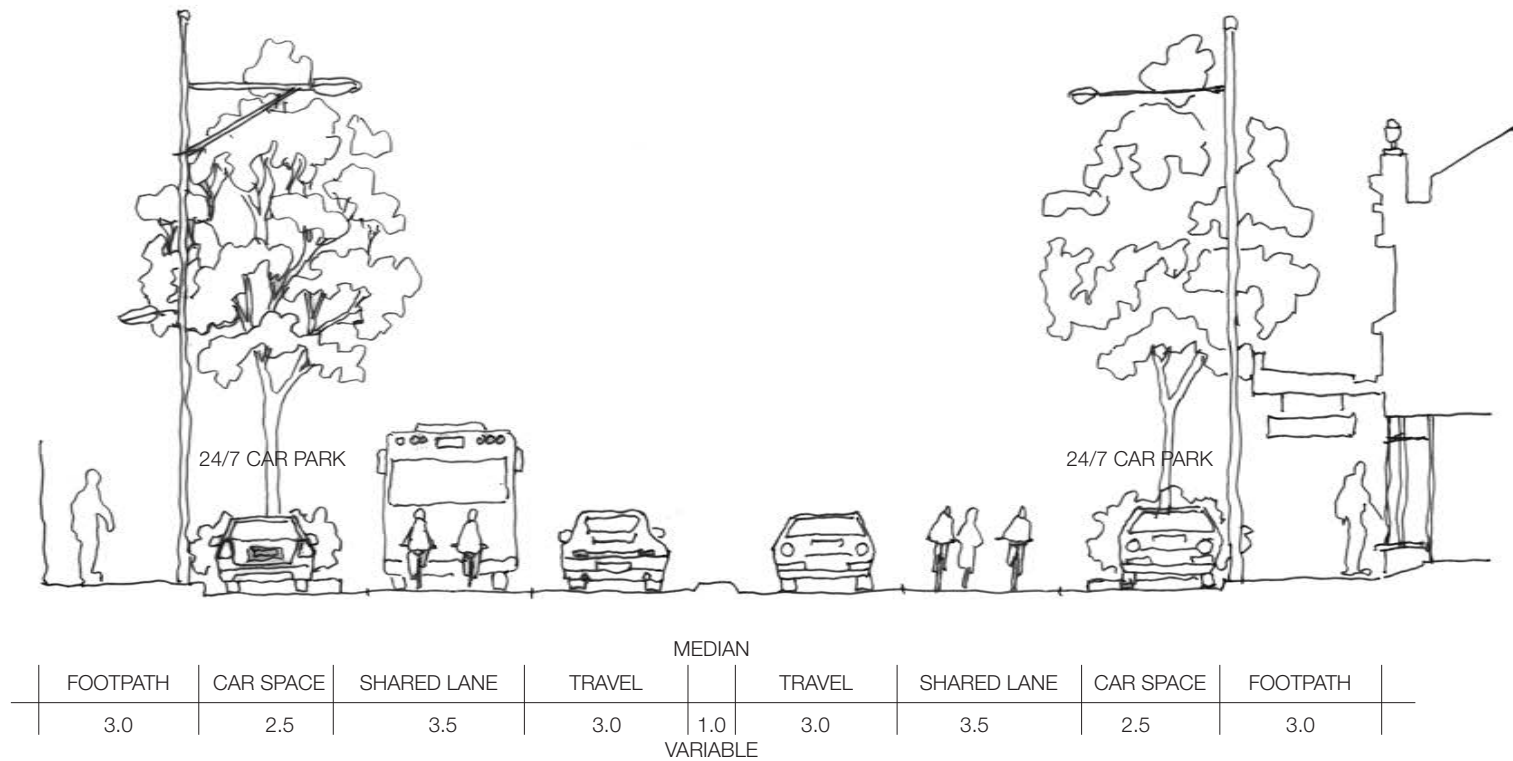
The Paddington Society 01 July 2023



## KEY DATA

- 30 kph speed limit
- 2 traffic lanes in each direction
- LH lane shared by cyclists, buses and cars
- 1 metre median for majority of length
- Traffic light controlled intersections with side streets
- 6 pairs signal controlled pedestrian crossings
- 6 informal mid-block pedestrian crossings
- 6 indented bus stop bays
- 77 new street trees
- 1300 m<sup>2</sup> additional pedestrian pavement/landscaping
- 110 permanent 24/7 kerbside car parking bays
- 10 bicycle parking stations on widened footpaths
- 50 park benches for casual seating on widened footpaths



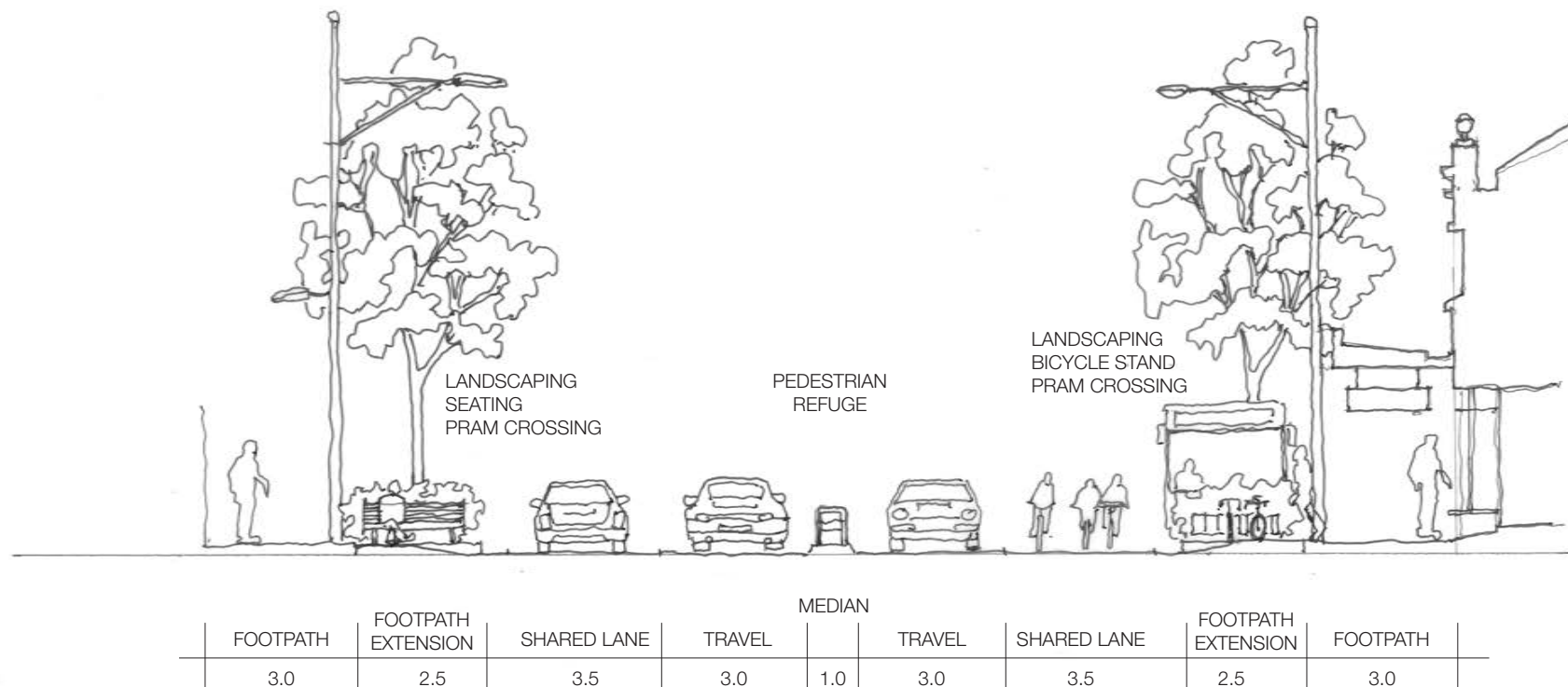


SECTION SHOWING CARPARKING BAYS

# OXFORD STREET PADDINGTON

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**SECTION SHOWING FOOTPATH EXTENSIONS**

# OXFORD STREET PADDINGTON

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		MEDIAN									
FOOTPATH	BUS BAY	SHARED LANE	TRAVEL			TRAVEL	SHARED LANE	BUS BAY	FOOTPATH		
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0		
				VARIABLE							

SECTION SHOWING BUS BAYS

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