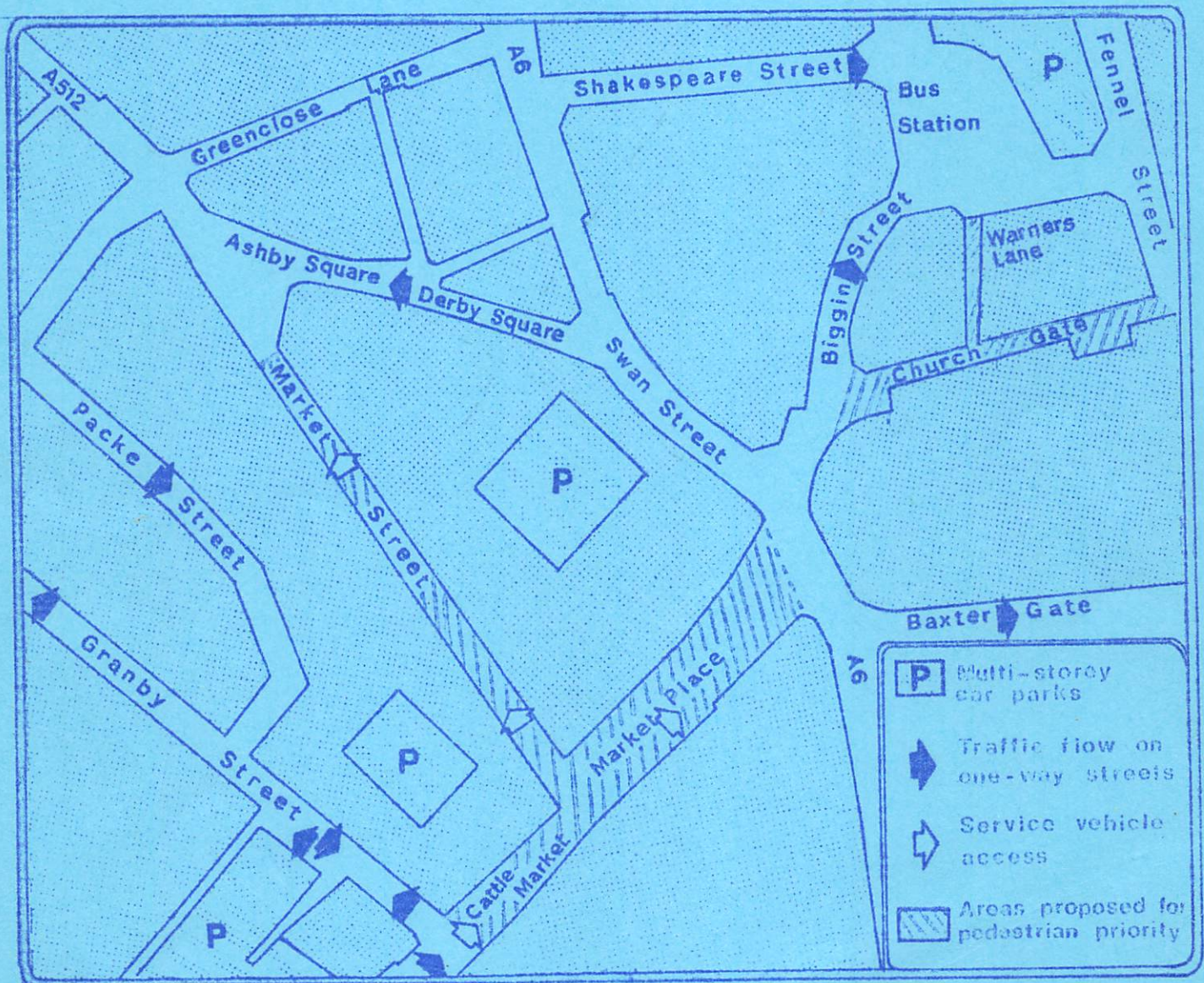


# PEDESTRIANISATION

## THE NEXT STEPS



A REPORT BY

LOUGHBOROUGH AND DISTRICT CIVIC TRUST

1976



**PEDESTRIANISATION IN LOUGHBOROUGH**

**THE NEXT STEPS**

**A Report by Loughborough and District Civic Trust**

**April 1976**

" At least 130 schemes giving the pedestrian exclusive or nearly exclusive use of streets have been established in Britain ... pedestrianisation schemes are today so frequently encountered that their absence may sometimes arouse more comment than their presence "

Civic Trust NEWS March 1976/54

## THE STORY SO FAR ...

The first official recognition of the need to give pedestrians priority over the motor vehicle in the central shopping areas appeared in 1971, in the Loughborough Draft Local Plan, which was subsequently approved by the former Loughborough Borough Council and the Leicestershire County Council. This Plan recommended pedestrian areas in Market Place, Church Gate and Warners Lane where motor vehicles would be banned altogether, and a pedestrian priority area for part of the A6 at its junction with Market Street and Biggin Street (following the construction of the inner circulatory road) where service vehicles would have access for deliveries.

Following a detailed study of these proposals together with the likely implementation of the road programme, a team of officers of the new Charnwood Borough Council prepared a scheme for the pedestrianisation of Churchgate and Warners Lane, and an area embracing Market Place, Market Street and Cattle Market. This scheme was exhibited for public comment in February 1975.

The Officers suggested that the scheme should be an experimental one lasting for nine months initially, during which time the advantages and disadvantages could be assessed, and that the sum of £5000 allocated in the Capital Programme be used to provide the minimum improvements needed to make the scheme viable. Seats, trees and shrubs were regarded as essential, but the expenditure on these items would not be abortive if the scheme were abandoned at the end of the experimental period since the trees and shrubs would be returned to the County Council nursery and the seats and shrub containers could be used elsewhere.

Charnwood Borough Council considered these proposals on 30th June 1975 and rejected them by the very narrow margin of 26 votes against to 24 votes in favour. The decision followed a particularly lively debate. One argument used against the scheme was that it could not be justified as "essential" at a time of economic recession. A subsidiary difficulty was the rising capital expenditure which might follow, since, although the amount for the experimental scheme was relatively small in the initial stages, the scheme should be progressive to be wholly satisfactory.

The proponents of the scheme stressed the economic, social, and aesthetic value of pedestrianisation. They drew attention to the low cost involved, the lack of commitment to longer term expenditure in the experimental period, the small burden on rates, and considerable spin-off in retail trade likely to follow. As one Councillor said "it was generally agreed that the scheme as proposed was well planned and would be of benefit to the town centre."

Public support for pedestrianisation was evident at the time of the participation exercises carried out by the officers of the Charnwood Borough Council. The Loughborough and District Civic Trust supported the scheme vigorously in the local press, and lobbied Councillors, and took part in a discussion on Radio Leicester. The Loughborough Environmental Group, a co-ordinating body for all amenity (in the broadest sense) groups in Loughborough, expressed its concern with public participation aspects of the scheme. The Loughborough & District Trades Council, representing a very large proportion of the working population of the town, voted strongly in favour of the scheme and lobbied Councillors directly.

Pedestrianisation was raised again at the meeting of the Policy Committee of Charnwood Borough Council in December 1975. The Committee

agreed that further consideration should be given to the scheme after the May Elections in 1976, and that the opportunity of re-appraising Loughborough's one way traffic system should be taken at the same time.

On May 1st 1976 the full Council of Charnwood Borough resolved to retain £5000 in the estimates for 1976/7 to be spent on pedestrianisation and asked that the implementation of the scheme be considered by the Highways and Planning Committee in June 1976.

So pedestrianisation is still an issue, and decisions still need to be made about the implementation of the scheme.

#### ... AND THE CIVIC TRUST'S ROLE

When pedestrianisation was being debated by Councillors in June 1975 the Civic Trust strongly urged the acceptance of the scheme on two grounds, firstly, the economic benefits and re-vitalisation of the town centre which have been shown to follow such schemes in other towns and, secondly, the amenity value of the area as a place of public resort, free from noise and pollution and the hazards and annoyance of constantly moving motor traffic.

Whilst our main aim at this time was to clarify the general arguments and issues involved, we were always aware of the need to promote ideas for a design scheme for the areas affected, once the decision to pedestrianise had been made. Indeed studies began several years ago when the Society proposed the Market Place as suitable for designation as a Conservation Area under the 1967 Civic Amenities Act (see the report "Conservation in Loughborough" by Loughborough & District Civic Trust 1970). This suggestion has not so far been taken up by the local authority. In 1973 the Civic Trust put forward a scheme for tree planting in the town centre "Trees in the Town", Loughborough & District Civic Trust 1973) which included planting suggestions for Market Place through to Bedford Square. In 1975 studies were made of the Market Place, Market Street, Cattle Market area to identify pedestrian movement, accessibility, and optimum layout of stalls and other features, together with landscaping, street furniture, facades, and the inclusion of alternative activities.

The purpose of this report is to set down the main conclusions arising from these studies. We do not wish to put forward a final scheme, but to suggest ways of designing pedestrian areas which will provide the best conditions for all who use them, and satisfy the requirements of occupiers of premises affected, trading bodies, the local authority, the amenity bodies, .... and the pedestrian.

## DESIGN IN THE MARKET PLACE

### Pedestrian movement:

The prerequisite for a successful design scheme for a pedestrian area is the understanding of pedestrian movement. It is necessary to know where people walk or loiter, where they bunch up or where they want to move more quickly, at what times of the day and on which days of the week, and why. Distinct patterns are visible and must be allowed for in a good design. An arbitrary layout, however attractive on paper or even to the eye, will be uncomfortable in use if this prime factor is forgotten.

The pattern of movement is created not only by the total space available, but by the inflow and outflow points to Market Place, by people's interest in shops and stalls, kerbside traders and other features, as well as by the personal space they need to feel around themselves, and their contacts with one another.

The most heavily used areas, as indicated by a pedestrian count in February 1971, are between Swan Street and Charnwood Precinct (west side) and between High Street and Cattle Market (east side). Considerable congestion occurs at peak times at the junction with High Street, and more especially at the junction with Swan Street. In addition to the north/south movements along the lines of stalls, there are east/west flows across the market, especially from the Precinct to High Street, and from the Precinct to the Woolworth area. Another discernible movement is a fanning out of people from the Cattle Market/Market Street corner, a movement hindered at present by traffic.

The largest spaces then should be allowed where pedestrian movements are the greatest, and market stalls, kerbside traders, street furniture and landscape features so sited that they do not impede the main flows of people. Eventually, different types of paving patterns should be used to indicate differences between "public" routes for general movement, and "private" areas for market stalls, and "rest" areas for seats, planting, street furniture. Although there are no barriers to movement, people discern a division and regulate their behaviour accordingly. Ground patterns are thus used to reflect the different uses of the area rather than being superimposed in a uniform way.

### Use of the spaces:

There is a need for continuous activity in Market Place if the space created by the removal of traffic is not to appear empty or underused. Its prime use is for marketing, and the removal of traffic will allow a better layout of stalls, possibly even the setting up of a small number of permanent stalls eventually, although space for the November Fair has to be borne in mind. There is scope for a number of changes; the re-arrangement of kerbside trading stalls to give greater freedom for pedestrian movement along the shop frontages, the re-orientation of stalls on the west side so that they do not have their backs to the Precinct, the forming of more east/west crossing points, and the use of Market Street and Cattle Market for the layout of stalls. Obviously stallholders have certain traditions and priorities, and it would be necessary to secure a balance between their needs and the pedestrians point of view.

The extension of the market to additional days of the week is another possibility, the growth of the town and the waiting list for stalls

probably warrants this. Also, there would be opportunity for specialist vendors of say, hand made pottery, jewellery and other craft work, paintings, uncommon plants, and secondhand/antique goods, to undertake one-day stands.

There are many alternative uses which would add to the interest and charm of the pedestrian areas on non-market days. The Market Place is large enough for music events, folk dancing, gymnastic displays, large scale chess, all kinds of charity events, and Loughborough has a great number of organisations as well as the University, Colleges, and schools, which may wish to put forward suggestions for new activities.

#### Permanent features:

Seating is a very basic feature of any pedestrian area, but its siting needs careful thought. Seats need to be adjacent to, but not in the line of, the main flows of pedestrian movement. Most people are happier with a barrier behind them and a private space in front. Semi-shade is usually more acceptable than deep shade or full sun, and windy draughty spots are always avoided. Seats are better located away from flower and shrub beds so that the opportunity for tossing litter among the plants is reduced.

The existing Fountain, placed in the Market Place to commemorate the opening of the Nantpantan Reservoir in 1875 is a nice historic touch, but it is hardly necessary to raise it on a large plinth, indeed, it would be rather out of scale. Some extended paving or flower beds at its base would be sufficient, and possibly mini-floodlighting. Again, the Fountain should be so sited that it does not impede movement.

However, a major feature would be desirable to provide interest and to punctuate the space. Moving items are always attractive, such as fountains of water, or a chiming clock, in fact they provide sound as well as movement, an extremely successful combination. We would like to see a Bell mounted in a well designed metal structure, which might symbolise some of the town's industries.

Another attractive feature, providing movement, sound, and a charm all its own, would be a Children's Roundabout. Alternatively, large smooth models which could be swarmed over, would add a lighthearted touch to the scene.

Finally, an Information Stand would be a most useful feature. This could display a map of the town, information about its places of interest, and details of forthcoming events for instance.

#### Landscape treatment:

Tree planting is essential in the town centre to provide a soft foil to the harsher lines and hard surfaces of buildings and pavings, but care must be exercised in the number planted and the choice of location, so that they do not obscure attractive facades or cause problems of light exclusion. For these reasons (and underground services permitting) trees would be better sited on the west side of Cattle Market rather than on the east side, and on the south side of Market Street rather than on the north side. Taller trees would be appropriate at the High Street end of Market Place to enclose the space. Some thought might be given to a balance of evergreen and deciduous trees, though evergreens provide constant colour and have less leaf fall, deciduous trees more noticeably reflect the changing seasons thereby adding variety.

Low shrubs, which look very pleasant in small beds raised about one to two feet high, need to be placed apart from the main pedestrian flows, and also apart from seats to minimise the likelihood of litter among the plants. Flowers appear to better advantage in separate containers (which can be moved as the need arises), also hanging baskets and flower boxes can look very festive if well maintained.

#### Street furniture:

This section includes such essential items as lighting, traffic signs, notices, litter bins and bus shelters. All of these items should be -

- i) well designed and pleasing elements in their own right
- ii) so sited as to be an integral part of the design as a whole
- iii) of sufficient quality to withstand weathering and wear and tear.

Although the best articles are expensive, we consider this expenditure entirely justified in order to achieve quality of environment in this focal point of the town.

Standardised items of street furniture such as post boxes, telephone kiosks, etc. also need to be combined with other elements in the scheme.

Cycle stands of an unobtrusive type would also be a useful addition to the pedestrian area.

#### Facades:

And finally to the buildings surrounding the pedestrian areas. Although few of the buildings are of great interest in themselves, their proportions, and the differing spaces they enclose in Market Place, Market Street, and Cattle Market, are quite good. The main eyesores consist of garish stickers in shop windows, and a certain amount of visible clutter in upper windows, and elimination of these unsatisfactory matters depends on the goodwill of occupiers.

Maintenance is fairly good, but some thought could be given to the use of colour to bring out the salient points of some buildings, and to add to the character of area. Such a colour scheme would need to be very carefully designed and carried out, but again with the goodwill of occupiers there is no reason why it should not be achieved.



## IMPROVEMENTS IN CHURCHGATE

### Pedestrian movement:

Churchgate, the narrow historic route between the Parish Church and the Market Place area, can alas never recover from being cruelly sliced across at Fennel Street and Lemyngton Street. However, the sections that remain are of great character, and are now included in a designated Conservation Area.

The proposals in the Draft Local Plan of 1971 anticipated the provision of rear service access and complete removal of motor traffic, for the section from Biggin Street to Fennel Street, as the street was too narrow for today's vehicles to use with any degree of safety. Pedestrian flows are less in Churchgate than in Market Place, some people diverting along Biggin Street to the shops and Bus Station. Nevertheless Churchgate is a popular shopping street, and people would be encouraged to use the Fennel Street end more if vacant land there were to be developed, and also if the junction of streets there was less formidable. At the moment, this very wide cross-roads with its fast flows of traffic, is inhibiting to anyone thinking of continuing beyond Fennel Street to the Parish Church area, so in addition to the need for a greater sense of enclosure, a clearly indicated crossing point is required.

### New uses:

The narrowness of Churchgate is ideal for pedestrian browsing, which will encourage the small specialist shop to flourish, but there is not the space for activities other than shopping. More residential use of the buildings would be possible, on the upper floors.

At the Fennel Street end, new development in the nature of a town pub, restaurant/tea shop, especially if bridged across the street, could provide a magnet for shoppers and business people, and would be well situated close to the Bus Station and Car Park.

### Features and landscape treatment:

Again, the essentially passage-like nature of Churchgate would indicate that features such as seats and shrubs would not be appropriate along its length. However, treatment at the Biggin Street end is needed at the point of entry. The present flower beds, besides being rather poor in quality, are badly sited. With paving across the width of the road, however, pedestrian movement could be properly assessed and trees and low shrubs sited so as not to impede the flow. Trees in this position would also soften the extremely harsh lines of the two-storey flat roofed buildings here.

Further up, where newer shops are set back, enclosure on the east side would form a small square, where a tree planted on the old building line would look very attractive.

The main feature of Churchgate might ultimately be the ground pattern. Attractive paving would be seen to advantage in this narrow intimate space. Flower baskets and window boxes, also being small scale and intimate in character, could be encouraged.

#### Facades:

The buildings are seen more as a continuous facade than as individual structures and it is the quality, not of uniformity but of sympathy, which needs to be developed in this situation. As with other pedestrianised areas, an overall design embodying a face-lift and colour scheme might be agreed to, in fact Churchgate could easily become the most delightful street in the town.

#### THE NEXT STEPS ...

In their Report of February 1975, the Officers of Charnwood Borough Council referred to the number of organisations they had consulted regarding the desirability of a pedestrianisation scheme. A joint approach would similarly seem to be the most effective way of bringing it to fruition.

For instance, representatives of all affected bodies could be invited to form an ad hoc Group which would jointly forward the different aspects of a pedestrian scheme.

Such a Group would embody the varying attitudes of the market traders, local owners and occupiers, special social groups (e.g. old people, disabled, etc.), the amenity societies, specialist designers, and so on, together with the relevant departments of Charnwood and Leicestershire Councils, in achieving the optimum conditions whatever the budget. Most importantly, a Group of this kind could ensure that the development and enhancement of pedestrian areas in the town was an ongoing activity, and not a once for all operation.

A threefold approach could be made. Firstly, agreement on a basic layout with satisfactory circulation for all users, secondly, encouragement in the provision of suitable permanent features, and thirdly, co-ordination and co-operation in a facelift and colour scheme for the surrounding buildings.

While basic features would be provided initially by the Borough and County Councils, various organisations and individuals might be happy to give special items, such as a seat or trees and plants, or even a more unique gift, with suitable plaques to mark the occasion. All sectors of the population would thus have an opportunity of achieving an identity with the central pedestrian areas of Loughborough.

... AND A WIDER VIEW

The term 'pedestrianisation' normally refers to the removal of vehicular traffic from streets which are then given over to the pedestrian. Sometimes it is necessary to permit the entry of service vehicles, sometimes buses are permitted, but invariably the pedestrian has priority. The results of pedestrianisation schemes have been an astonishing and delightful improvement in central areas, decaying shopping streets have been revitalised, buildings restored, squares have resumed their inherent character, and people have been enabled to shop and enjoy their leisure in safe, quiet, pollution-free, and aesthetically satisfying surroundings.

Can we afford pedestrianisation in a "no growth" situation? Ewart Parkinson, President of the Royal Town Planning Institute, said in his presidential address in November 1975 "with a no economic growth situation, it might be easier to achieve human qualities in our environment... planners will have to give more attention to a variety of small-scale, unglamorous, non-capital intensive traffic measures ...for a wider variety of objectives: bus lanes here, pedestrian priority there, cyclists here, motorists there." In fact, pedestrianisation must be seen as part of general traffic policies including the development of roads, location of car parks, improvement of public transport, and so on. As the DoE Manual in 1973 said "any good traffic management scheme recognises pedestrians as a class of traffic requiring equal treatment with vehicles."

Nor should this relate only to the central areas. There is equal need for planned pedestrian movement throughout the town, so that schoolchildren, mothers with young children, and elderly people can move by safe direct routes between home and schools, shops, transport nodes, and open spaces. Some pedestrian routes already exist, such as the one along Woodbrook which provides a link with school, shops, playing fields, and the open countryside. Others would be possible at a very low cost, indeed this is a project which could very well be forwarded by volunteers.

Rural areas also require consideration. From many small villages it is only possible to take a walk along lanes without pavements, with the accompanying traffic hazards, so provision for the pedestrian is equally important here. Pedestrianisation is not the prerogative of the town.

It all depends in priorities. Pedestrianisation is not a "frill" but an integral part of the planned environment, and we make a plea for Charnwood not to lag behind in providing sound comprehensive provision for the pedestrian.

## APPENDIX 1

### Statistical summary.

#### Proposals - Draft Structure Plan 1971

Dimensions of pedestrian area (Churchgate, Warners Lane, Swan Street)	0.6 acres	0.2 hectares
Dimensions of pedestrian priority area (Market Place, Devonshire Square)	1.0 acre	0.4 hectares

#### Proposals - Project Team's Report 1975

Dimensions of pedestrian area (Churchgate, Warners Lane)	0.3 acres	0.1 hectares
Dimensions of pedestrian priority area (Market Place, Market Street, Cattle Market)	1.0 acre	1.4 hectares

Gross retail floor space, premises affected by current scheme, 1967 estimate	560,000 square feet
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Initial cost of scheme	£4,500 - £5,000
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Capital cost of full scheme	£105,000
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Population, Charnwood District, 1971	131,000
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Potential users of Market Place, 1971 estimates	50,000 persons per week
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Capital cost per head, potential catchment population, full scheme	£0.80p
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Rate burden on (part) initial cost, 1975 figures	£0.02p
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Pedestrian areas	-	all vehicles banned
Pedestrian priority areas	-	{motor vehicles banned 10.00 am to 6.00 pm (service delivery vehicles unrestricted

## APPENDIX 2

### The impact on trade of pedestrianisation schemes

City or town and approx. population	Extent of scheme in hectares	Changes in turnover	Traders' attitudes
Hereford 47,150		+ 10 - 15 %	Favourable
Watford 77,690			72% of traders recorded a favourable effect on trade, 20% neutral, 8% unfavourable
Norwich 119,600			At the time of the experimental scheme 28 out of 30 shops did more trade
Newcastle 222,150	0.6		Satisfied
Leeds 502,320	1.2	+ 20%	Great commercial success
Glasgow 933,000	3.6		Favourable
Göteborg 450,000	4.6		Satisfied
Copenhagen 630,000	1.1	+ 25 - 40%	Protests before then strongly favoured
Essen 725,000	2.8	+ 25 - 35%	Initial rejection then favourable
Cologne 862,282	2.5	+ 25 - 35%	Initial rejection then favourable
Düsseldorf 673,500	0.9	+ 36 - 40%	Initial rejection then favourable
Munich 1,300,000	1.8	+ 40%	Favourable
Vienna 1,700,000	2.3	+ 20%	More facilities wanted
Minneapolis 434,000	2.5	+ 14%	Very satisfied

Sources: G.L.C. Study Tour of Pedestrianised Streets in Europe and American Cities

Civic Trust News March 1976/54



# APPENDIX 3.

## Car ownership in Loughborough (1971 Census) by Wards.

Ward	Total persons	Without a car	Total households	Without a car	
Burton	6390	36%	2002	40%	
Hastings	6020	57%	2134	60%	*
Lemyngton	5500	53%	1884	59%	*
Southfields	4046	44%	1612	54%	*
Storer	4413	51%	1704	59%	*
Beaumont	15,986	28%	5039	32%	

\* over 50% of households without a car

## Average % of households without a car. 1971

Loughborough M.B.	46.8%
Barrow on Soar R.D.	33.2%
Charnwood	38.6%

## APPENDIX 4

### Some useful references

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