

## ESMOND STREET POCKET PARK / PLAY AREA

Wandsworth Living Streets is encouraged by the council's efforts to promote active travel as a means to achieve more sustainable transport in the borough and to improve air quality. This accords with recent policy statements by Transport for London<sup>1</sup> and with many publications that are concerned about the impact of motorised vehicles on health.<sup>2</sup>

Set out below is a proposal which is consistent with the council's intentions. It is submitted by Wandsworth Living Streets as an example of what might be done here and elsewhere to improve the amenity of residential streets whilst at the same time promoting active travel. It draws heavily from the successful implementation of the Mini-Holland project in the Borough of Waltham Forest, where filtered permeability<sup>3</sup> has significantly reduced extraneous traffic in residential areas, improved the public realm and encouraged more people to either walk or cycle as a means of travel.

At this stage residents in the vicinity have not been consulted as it is assumed that the council will undertake this task if the proposal proceeds. Similarly costs have not been estimated for the same reason. While the cost will not be insignificant it should be easily met from the neighbourhood allocation of funds collected through the community infrastructure levy. We gather that some £1.8 million has been raised for neighbourhood investment, much of which was generated from new development in the vicinity of the proposal, notably Upper Richmond Road.

### Proposal

Esmond Street is a residential road in East Putney (SW15) that passes below a bridge supporting the District Line. The street provides access to only 5 premises, numbers 30A, 32A and 32B plus two commercial establishments (D.A.Motors and Guitar Aid). Traffic volumes are minimal and a significant proportion are drivers rat-running from Putney Bridge Road to Oxford Road when queues occur on the former. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1 : Esmond Street Rat Run**



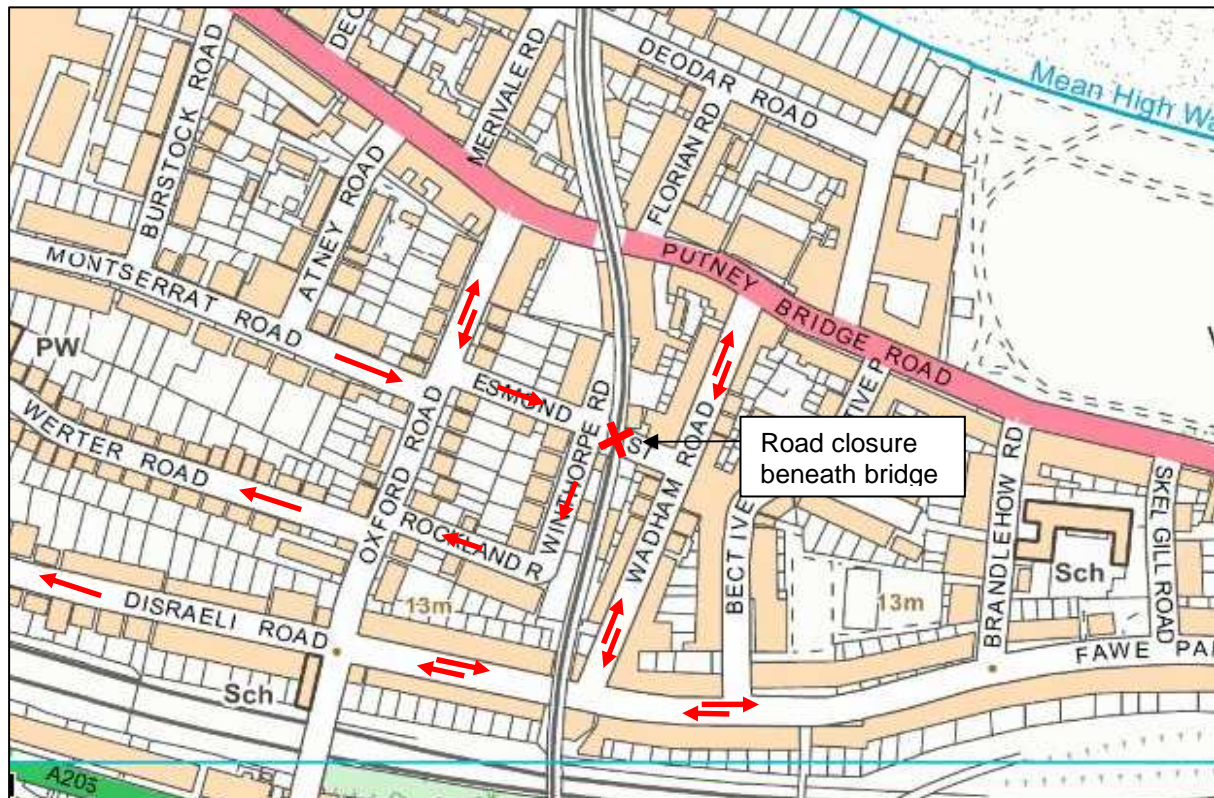
<sup>1</sup> Improving the health of Londoners - Transport action plan. TfL

<sup>2</sup> Local actions to mitigate the health impacts of cars - A briefing statement. A joint publication by the Faculty of Public Health, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Royal Society for Public Health, Transport and Health Study Group, CIWEM and Professional Alliance for Transport and Health.

<sup>3</sup> Filtered permeability refers to measures that allow cyclists and pedestrians to pass but not motorised vehicles.

It is proposed to close Esmond Street below the bridge, as shown in Figure 2 and utilise the space to create pocket park and play area for children. The latter would not require any play equipment as the intention is to provide a safe environment for children to engage in games and other activities which in a previous era were conducted on the street.

**Figure 2 : Esmond Street Pocket Park / Play Area : Road Closure**



Traffic implications are few. Residents of Wadham Road would need to enter or exit via Disraeli Road to the south or Putney Bridge Road to the north. Rat-running via Esmond Street would no longer be possible. 6 parking spaces would be replaced by 3 re-assigned spaces as shown in Figure 3.

The pocket park / play area would comprise :-

- resurfacing of the entire width (wall to wall) with an appropriate concrete block,
- installation of raised plant beds (in brick) to accommodate selected plants,
- planting of street trees,
- seating, and
- placement of wooden blocks and obstructions to prevent vehicle movements,

A plan of the pocket park / play area is given in Figure 4. How the proposal might look is compared with the existing appearance of the street in Figures 5 and 6.

The proposal is in line with the recommendations of numerous reports concerned with traffic and associated problems of air quality. By creating a pleasant environment for people walking and cycling it will encourage active travel in preference to driving.

The provision of a local play area will promote informal outdoor exercise for children living in the neighbourhood and help reduce high levels of obesity amongst the young.

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Figure 3 : Esmond Street Pocket Park / Play Area : Reassignment of Parking Spaces

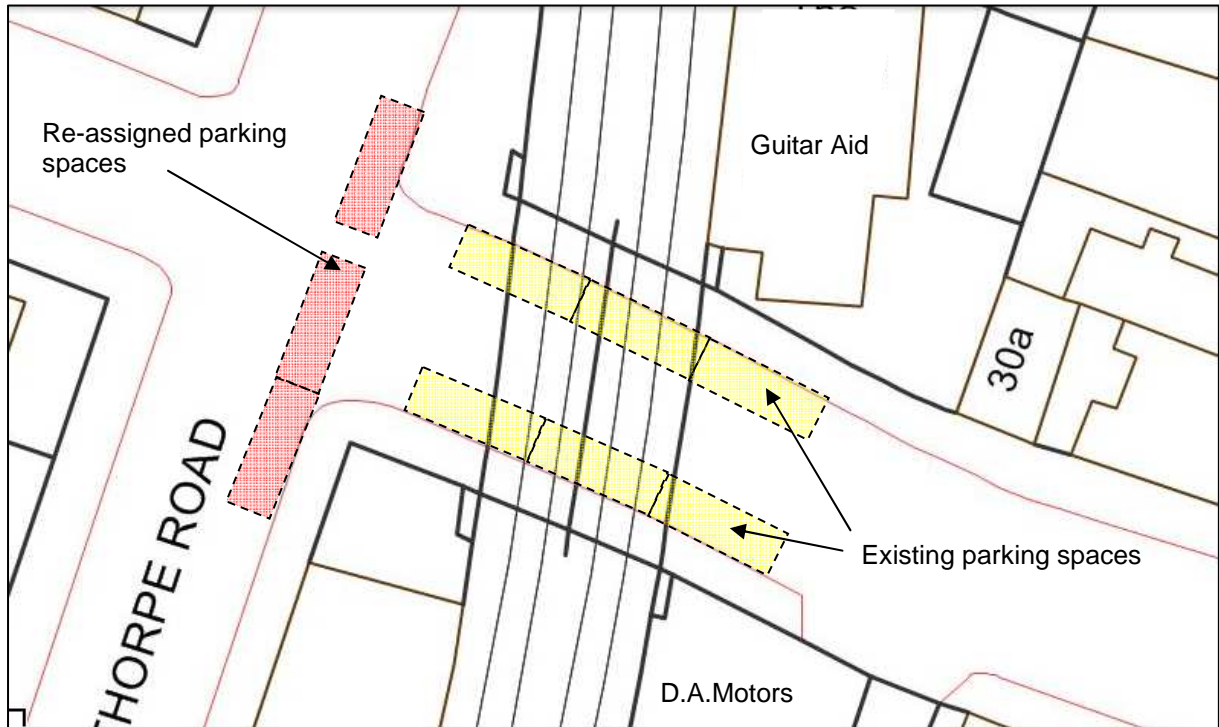
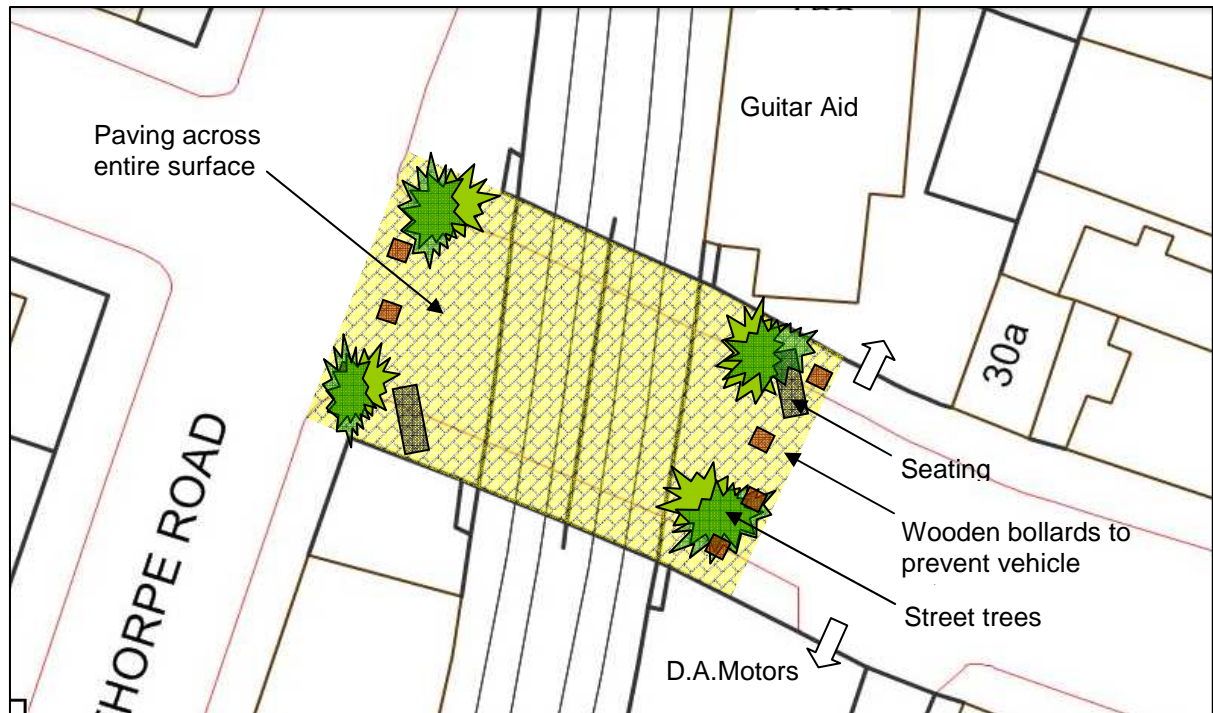


Figure 4 : Esmond Street Pocket Park / Play Area : Detail



**Figure 5 : Existing Situation**



**Figure 6 : Proposal**

