

CHILHAM SQUARE DESIGN PROPOSAL

OPTION 3

1. SUMMARY LAYOUT DESCRIPTION:

This scheme does away with the current circulatory system by keeping traffic to a central throughway and away from ancient buildings. The layout includes 22 well-ordered parking bays. Good traffic flow is maintained and access roads will operate as they do now.

Crucially, this scheme reclaims a significant proportion of the Square for pedestrians and provides safe, flexible space for small events, business activities socializing and contemplation of this historic site. The inclusion of 'shared areas' outside the White Horse and on Taylors Hill are designed to provide additional traffic-calmed spaces for parents, churchgoers, and pub users.

The basic layout could be implemented at a modest initial cost by retaining the present surface and delineating areas with simple studs and oak posts (some removable and, in places, joined by link chain). A more sensitive approach to surface finishes, using varied local brick could be added over time as funding becomes available. There would also be opportunities for low-maintenance greenery, seating etc. The scheme also includes designated 'walking-bus' footpaths between the School, Taylors Hill car park and the church and also addresses the community's long-standing disappointment with the under-use of Taylors Hill car park by modifying the entrance at that end.

In conclusion: This scheme can transform the village square from little more than a roundabout and car park into a space that enhances the village's unique historic character and balances and respects the needs of drivers, pedestrians, residents, businesses and visitors.

2. PARKING ARRANGEMENTS AND PROVISION

Option 3:

- promotes orderly and considerate parking
- provides clearly marked parking spaces for 22 cars (inc. 2 for disabled)
- keeps parking away from historic buildings
- prevents rogue parking
- safeguards emergency access and goods delivery
- encourages better use of Taylors Hill Car Park

3. PEDESTRIAN & VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

Option 3:

- reclaims a very significant area of the square for pedestrians by replacing the wasteful circulatory system
- creates much safer walking routes
- keeps traffic away from buildings with significant reduction in vibration damage to historic structures
- better for pub customers and church visitors as layout keeps most traffic away from the area directly outside the White Horse and Church entrance
- designates areas of 'shared' space' for greater harmony between users
- greatly improves visibility for both drivers and pedestrians
- reduces tensions between residents and visitors and pedestrians and drivers
- introduces clear navigation points for drivers
- creates a much less chaotic environment
- safeguards access for emergency and delivery vehicles

4. VIEWS & AESTHETICS

Option 3:

- uses clear but unobtrusive features to promote a well managed environment
- would use materials that are sensitive to the Square's unique historic character
- is consistent with the Kent Downs AONB guidelines
- creates safer, open spaces where visitors can admire key buildings
- provides spaces for temporary and permanent seating, greenery, cycle rack etc.

- encourages greater pride in our village

5. SOCIAL USAGE

Option 3:

- provides readily available space for small-scale events, fairs, markets and other business and social activities
- permanent space for Christmas tree and carols, Morris dancing etc.
- plenty of space for educational activities and guided tours to assemble
- parking bays that can be temporarily commandeered to greatly extend useable space without costly disruption of traffic flow
- improved environment will have positive impact on local businesses

6. POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Option 3:

- in its basic form, this layout can be introduced and tested with quite low levels of initial investment
- can be upgraded in stages as funds become available
- small-scale events can take place without expensive police closure orders
- is sustainable and makes few maintenance demands

6. CASE FOR

As can be seen from all the reasons above, Option3 provides an extremely close match with the aspirations agreed by our Parish community at the open meeting held on 27th May 2010

7. CASE AGAINST

a) There would be a reduction in parking but Option 3 provides 22 bays that would still meet a substantial percentage (see parking survey data) of normal demand outside the mid-afternoon and weekend peaks.

b) Opportunities for school drop-off/pick-up are reduced. However Option 3 does include:

- a safer pathway between Taylors Hill car park and the School playground
- a safer walking route between School and Church
- safer spaces for educational activities
- A short but healthy experience of fresh air between car and school

c) The scheme does not remove parking from sight lines between the church and castle but does reduce the current number of parked vehicles between these two points. The sight lines on main route between The Street and Taylors Hill are greatly improved.

d) Some residents of the square may feel that their privacy could be compromised but this is offset by not having traffic passing directly outside their buildings, less noise and damage from vibration and collision and a much pleasanter outlook.