

## Access problems at Oakfield Road, Davenport



A photograph of Oakfield Road taken at 9.30am on Thursday 25 February 2016. Pedestrian access on the north side is impossible, and the bus stop obstructed. Large vehicles loading and unloading.



11 February 2016, 12:35: a novel use for a bus stop.

**Report by Charlie Hulme. March 2016**

## **From the Archive:**

### **Thriving estate is an 'eyesore' - residents**

*Stockport Express Advertiser, 4 April 1985*

Angry residents have condemned a thriving industrial estate as 'an eyesore' and a serious threat to safety. The estate, which consists of units mainly to car businesses, is situated at the top of Oakfield Road, Davenport. Residents claim that cars are often left outside the premises, blocking the pavement, and forcing pedestrians into the busy road. They also say that cars parked on both sides of the road make it difficult, and in some places impossible, for buses to get through.

'There are lots of mothers round this area who are forced into the road because of cars parked on the pavement' said mother-of-two Mrs. Joy Edwards. Invalid Mrs. Muriel Leach says she can no longer use her battery-powered car. 'I bought the vehicle to give me a bit of independence. Now I don't use it, because I'm frightened to go on the road,' she said.

But unit proprietors say the problem is caused by commuters using nearby Davenport station. 'Often we get the blame for people using the station who leave their vehicles,' explained Mr. Kenneth McEwen, of McEwen Brothers. 'We have brought industry to the area, and jobs have been created,' said Mr. Chris Gilley, proprietor of one of the units.

A spokesman for Stockport Council's Works Division said proposals were being put to the Traffic Management Committee today (Thursday).

### **Extract from a letter to Residents of the area, from Stockport Council's Director of Works. 11 November 1991**

Having removed the greatest sources of complaint [by means of the short one-way section of road], the energies of the Traffic Management Section were then channelled into addressing the problems caused by the activities of the garages. Discussions were held with the garage proprietors and a plan offering the potential of a solution to the conflicting uses of this section of Oakfield Road by residents, the garages, the Happy Day Nursery and the shops fronting Bramhall Lane was presented to the Transportation and Works (Traffic Regulation) Sub-Committee at their meeting on 14 November 1990. It was not, however, until 16 January 1991, that the Transportation and Works (Traffic Regulation) Sub Committee resolved to introduce the measures which have now been implemented.

The expectations of these measures are that by creating, in a distinctive texture and colour, a width of new footway and introducing, over its length, a "No waiting At Any Time" restriction, the garages will be provided with a more usable area of forecourt, the management of which is for them to organise, whilst pedestrians will have a clear and distinctive footway which is unequivocally part of the public highway and obliged to be kept clear of obstruction by a fully enforceable 'No Waiting At Any Time' Order. As these measures are still in their infancy, it is not yet possible to comment on their effectiveness, but since the introduction of the prohibition of waiting, should vehicles park on or alongside the footway, an offence is committed and can now be addressed by the Police Authority.

## The problem

Thirty years have passed since the newspaper report of 1985, and 25 since the measures described in the letter from the council were implemented. The one-way section, and the more recent 'no entry except for access' sign at the Elmfield Road / Garners Lane junction, and 20mph restriction have reduced the amount of traffic 'rat-running' along Oakfield Road somewhat – at the expense of the loss of a useful bus stop - but the amount of traffic in and around Oakfield Road has grown again, thanks to changes in the use of the garages further residential building and increased car ownership. Many people are also disobeying the rules and driving through from Garners Lane.

The gardening and printing company in particular has its own vehicles which are frequently parked in the street and lorries call to deliver materials and collect products. The red-coloured part of the pathway intended for the sole use of pedestrians is often obstructed, sometimes used as workspace by the garage staff, whose own cars and those of the flats above the shops on Bramhall Lane, also need somewhere to park.

The double-yellow lines, which had faded into non-existence, were re-instated in 2015 following requests to the council by local residents, but this has done little to deter misuse. The Council's traffic officers tell us that despite the promise made in 1991, the police cannot take action about cars parked on the pavement, and the overstretched Council Parking Enforcement Officers cannot visit every working day.



From the point of view of wheelchair and mobility scooter users there is a further problem which has never been solved. There is a high kerb adjacent to the bus stop, originally part of a rear access to the Bramhall Lane buildings before the one on the corner was extended. As the picture shows, the area is routinely used as a parking space. The window to the right of the white car belongs to the extension, once a small antique shop.

## A partial solution?

It is, of course, true that the businesses in the garages are still thriving, helping the economy of the area and providing employment opportunities, and it seems there is no hope of keeping the area clear for pedestrians. At the very least, however, action is needed to prevent obstruction of the bus stop.

Perhaps an accessible route for pedestrians would simply be to use the other side of Oakfield Road. Unfortunately, at present this is not easy to negotiate, and does require a crossing of the road at the junction of Bramhall Lane to reach the bus stop, shops or railway station, and also for many people a crossing of Beechfield Road for which no dropped kerb is provided.

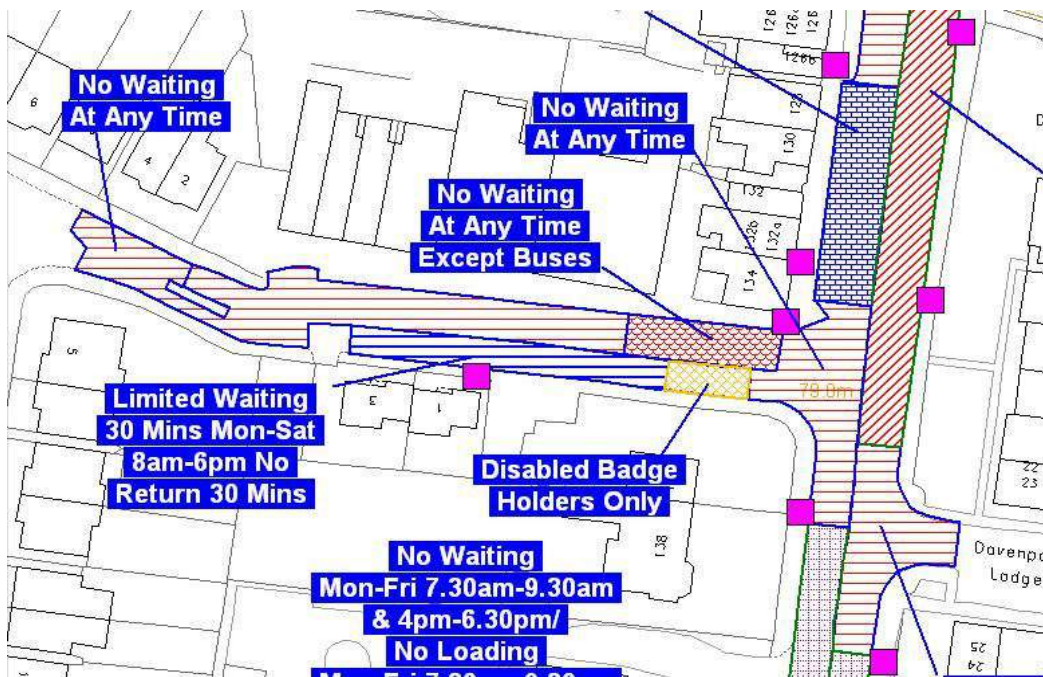
For many years, perhaps since the petrol-filling station which once stood there was abandoned, the pavement surface on the south side of Oakfield Road, between Bramhall Lane and Beechfield Road had been in poor condition with broken-up and rough tarmac. Recently there has been some patching-up of the surface, but what is really needed is a complete re-laying of the whole length.



This view from 17 February 2016 shows two new patches, in the foreground and by the lamp post, with untreated areas between. Note also the cars parking on the pavement beyond the double-yellow lines.



A major obstacle facing wheelchairs, mobility scooters and people with pushchairs or shopping trolleys is the kerb round the gateway adjacent to No.3 Oakfield Road. Clearly this needs to be provided with dropped kerbs each side. These two views show both sides. Again, very rough pavement in evidence.



This diagram prepared by the Council shows the parking regulations in the Oakfield Road area as they stand in 2016. The 'Limited Waiting' area on the south side of Oakfield Road is widely ignored by all; vehicles are usually left standing there all day, sometimes being worked on by garage staff. The contra-flow cycleway allowing cyclists to pass through the one-way section is also frequently obstructed by parked vehicles.



## Conclusion

I offer this report to Councillors and anyone else concerned, in the hope that it will help with decision-making on this difficult issue. I have lived on Beechfield Road for over 30 years and use this route most days. At the moment I am not disabled in any way, but we have no plans to move from the area; hopefully if I do lose my mobility in the future something will have been done to improve the situation.

Charlie Hulme, March 2016. [charlie@davenportstation.org.uk](mailto:charlie@davenportstation.org.uk)  
 Download a copy: [davenportstation.org.uk/oakfield-report.pdf](http://davenportstation.org.uk/oakfield-report.pdf)