

# Street Evolution

Re-imagining streets  
post lockdown



# Re-imagining our streets post Covid-19

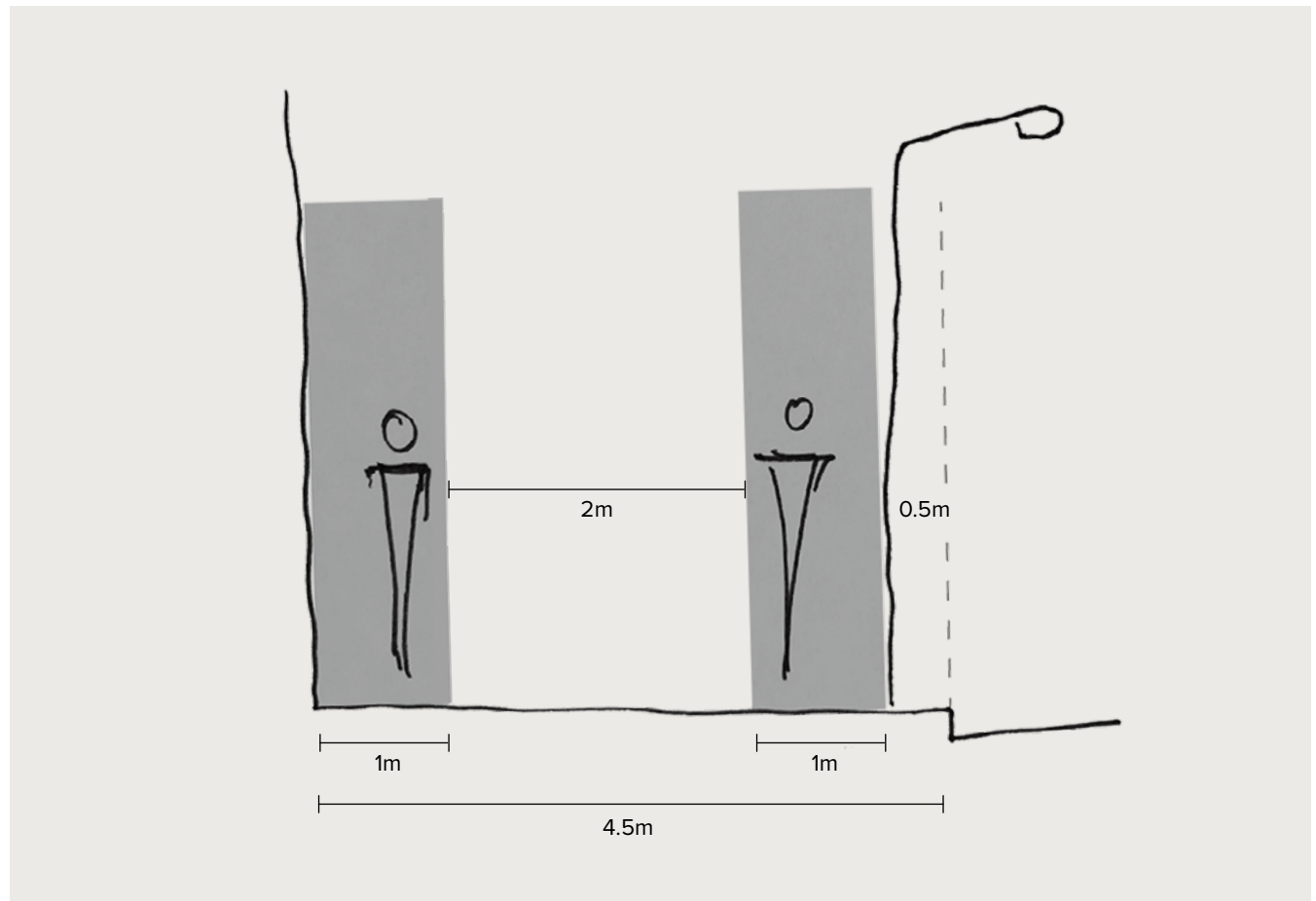
Our streets must enable the efficient movement of traffic in all its forms – cars, buses, lorries, vans, bikes and people on foot. In retail areas, they provide ‘front doors’ for shops and other facilities. They’re also places for people to stop, rest and meet others.

## Whatever the activity, streets must be safe.

In the social-distancing world, walking safely has come to mean something new. Pedestrians must not only be safe from traffic they also need to keep at least 2m apart. This has profound implications for how streets are laid out.

## Residential streets

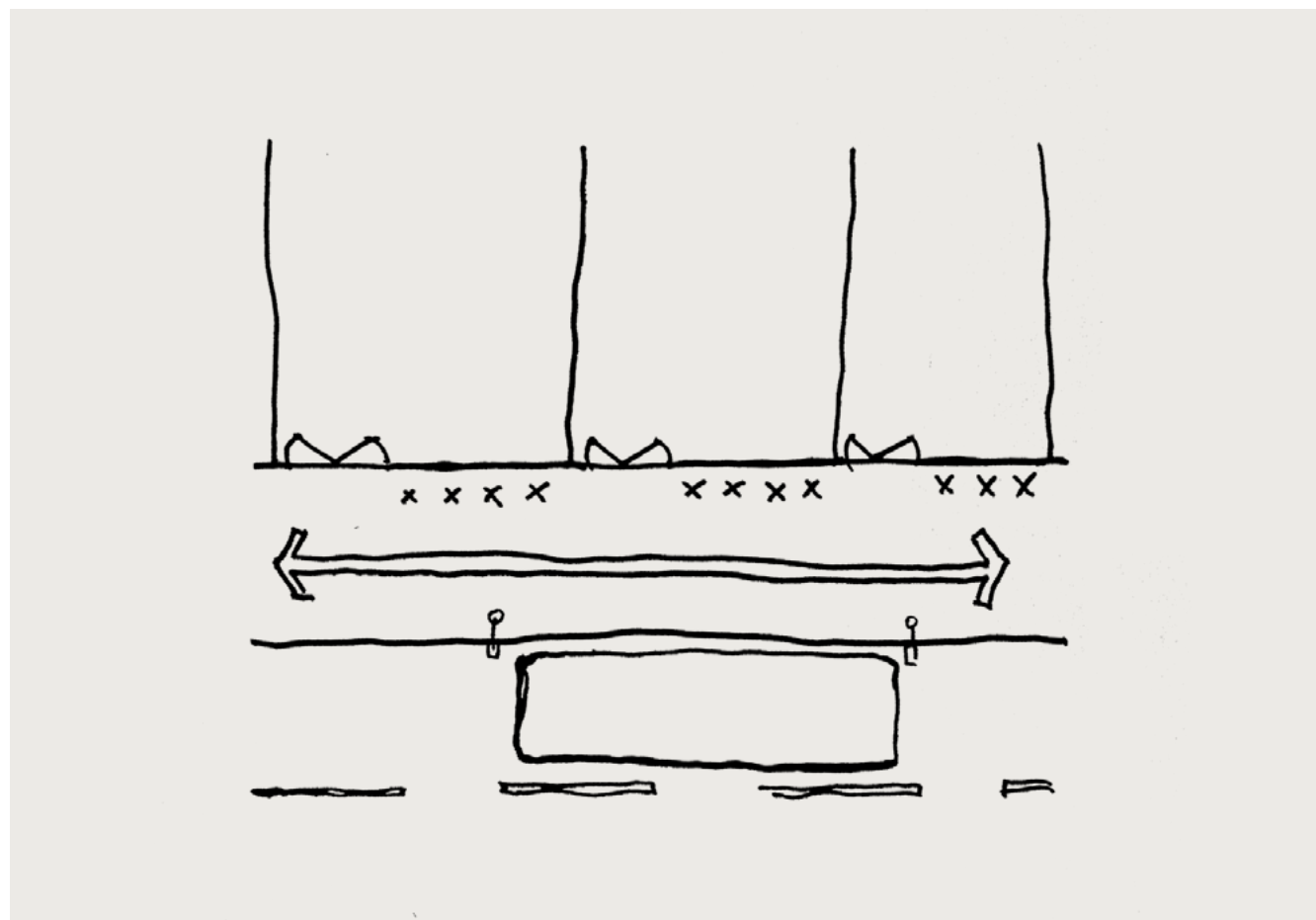
It's not just about creating enough space between pedestrians. Space needs making for the pedestrians themselves as well as between them and the kerb or wall or piece of street furniture. The minimum safe width in a residential area is 4.5m (right).





### Retail areas

Retail streets require more space to safely accommodate both shoppers queueing to enter outlets and pedestrians passing by.





Assuming two-way pedestrian movement, this means a footway width of 7m (right).

So, to maintain social distancing, minimum footway widths should change from 2m to 4.5m or 7m – between 2.5 and 5m more space.

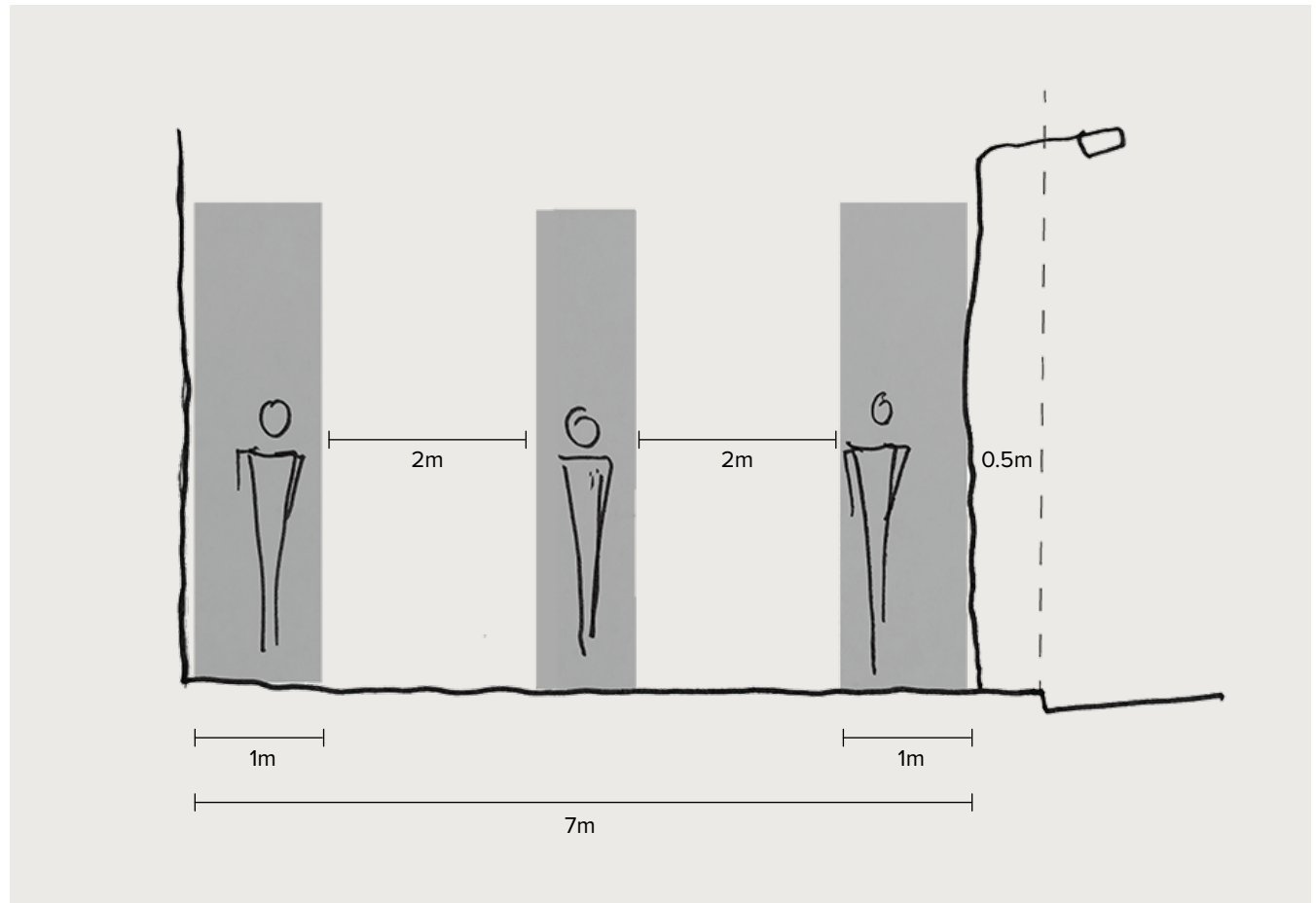
#### Where will the extra width come from?

In some places, footways will already be sufficiently wide to enable social distancing. In others, carriageway running lanes will be wide enough that much of the extra space can be found by reducing lane widths to modern standards.

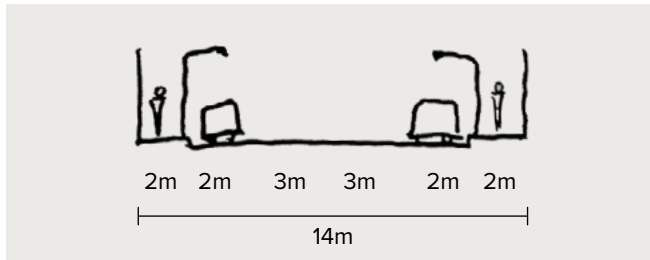
In many cases, neither option is available. So, what's the solution?

In broad terms, the extra space is equivalent to a running lane (circa 3m) or a parking space (circa 2m) on either side in residential streets, and twice that on retail or high streets.

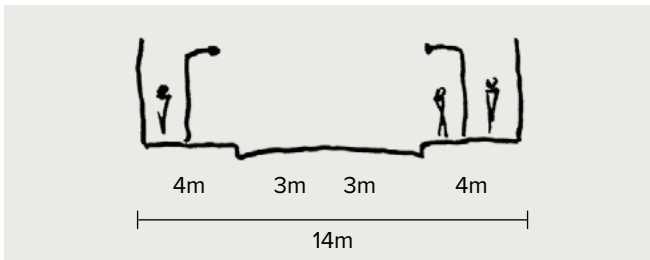
In retail areas, there is little choice but to widen the footways, perhaps by taking the space currently allocated for parking and loading or turning dual carriageways into single carriageways. Both can easily and quickly be achieved using a combination of paint and temporary barriers, delivered using experimental traffic orders.



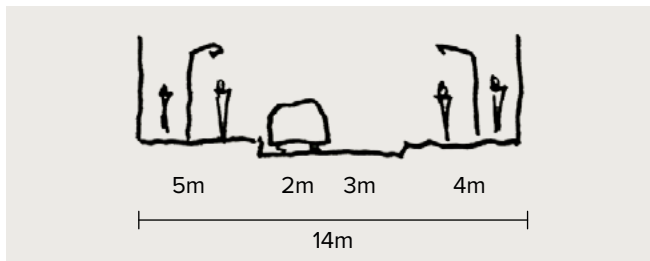
Residential streets are trickier. A standard two-way residential street with parking on both sides and 2m footways requires a 14m corridor.



To accommodate safe provision for pedestrians on both sides of the street, parking will need to be either removed completely...



... or parking only on one side, with the carriageway reduced to one lane and made one-way.



To maintain access, the one-way system will need careful design, but this is relatively straightforward. The big question is what happens to the vehicles?

In many places, demand for on-street parking already outstrips supply so halving the number of spaces will exacerbate the problem.

Yet, streets must be safe in post Covid-19 world, and pedestrians cannot be expected to walk in the road to maintain social distancing.

### Solving the puzzle

Making a residential street access only can reduce vehicular movements sufficiently that it is mostly safe to walk in the carriageway. Where a street cannot be made access only, changes should be made to the layout, such as the 'filtered permeability' (overleaf) that enables through-access for walking and cycling but removes it for motor vehicles.

As well as creating streets that give priority to pedestrians and cyclists, they can also help to establish a network of genuine 'Quietways' – streets that are more than just routes away from main thoroughfares, but are so quiet, so devoid of motor traffic that they can be enjoyed by pedestrians and cyclists of all ages, including families and children.

This is the opportunity before us. If planned quickly and efficiently, we can create in weeks a new experience, one many people crave – our residential streets can become outdoor rooms, safe and used by everyone.



Temporary cycle lane (Hove)



### No one-size fits all

No one solution fits all streets. Each must be considered in terms of its function and its dimensions. Broadly the following applies:

Streets with footways wide enough to maintain social distancing require no further action.

Footways on high streets and through-roads should be widened as set out above.

Where space is insufficient to increase the width of a footway, measures should be taken to reduce vehicular demand to a level that walking and cycling – even playing – in the carriageway is safe.

Most changes can be delivered quickly and cheaply using planters and other temporary treatments supported by temporary traffic orders.

When social distancing is no longer necessary, local communities can be consulted to determine whether they wish to keep the measures or return to the previous arrangements. Those modifications that are retained can be made permanent, with high-quality treatments replacing the temporary ones and other measures implemented to further enhance the area.



Filtered permeability (Lea Bridge Road)

The opportunity to evolve our streets will need to be delivered quickly. The following key steps can enable fast, transformational change that can later be made permanent.

# 1.

## Plan

High-level changes such as where cycle lanes should be added, or how footways can be widened, or where streets can be made access only should be set out in a simple plan. These can then be prioritised.

# 2.

## Design

Priority schemes can immediately be drawn up – first the concept, then the detailed design. There are many common solutions, but understanding local conditions is key to delivering the right one. Quick turnaround and capacity to deliver is important. Not all schemes require traditional detailed design, but it is important to review existing arrangements, such as turning radii, to see if changes are necessary.

# 3.

## Deliver

Schemes can often be delivered without changes to existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). However, where needed, Experimental TROs are likely to provide a good route to quick implementation. Most schemes could initially be delivered quickly and easily using traditional traffic management apparatus, while place-based schemes could adopt a 'paint and planters' approach. Consider early on whether you have the internal capacity to deliver a scheme or if external procurement is required.

# 4.

## Improve

Once implemented, it will be necessary in the short term to make sure the intervention is working as planned. Over the medium- to long-term, there will be scope for further refinement or future formalisation with improved materials. Consultation with stakeholders and the public can be considered where required.

We have seen that public health is the cornerstone of our economy. Healthy places and streets need to be a central part of both our adaption and recovery strategies. We must act now to create a smarter, more sustainable future.

**This is Street Evolution.**



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