

TRAFFIC CALMING



Sight lines

There are no hard and fast rules



Drivers have to take extra care. The road is safe



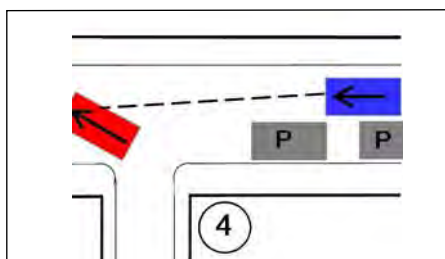
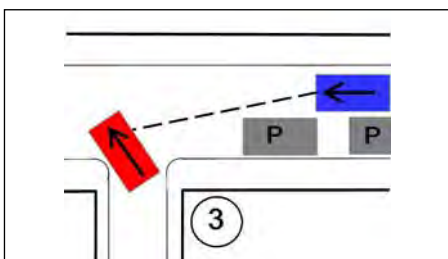
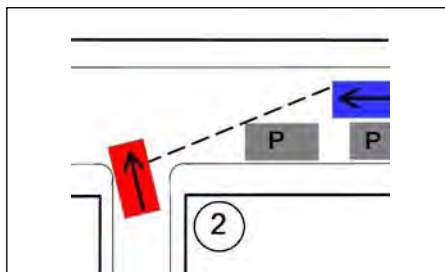
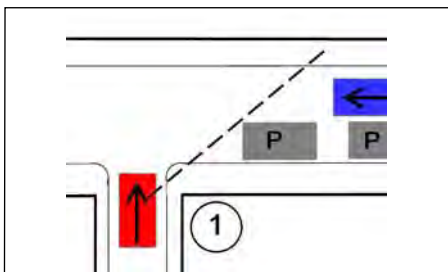
Trees in a village road with cars parked between



Driver's view at a tight junction, below



Character impossible with normal sight lines



Gently does it. Where speeds and volumes are low, drivers can safely negotiate a tight junction

SIGHTLINES. PURPOSE AND EFFECT

Sight lines, as the name suggests are the clear lines of sight a driver has of other vehicles, usually at a road junction. The greater the distance a driver can see, goes the theory, the more time he has to stop or slow down to avoid an accident.

Long sight lines applied to the design of a new road create wide junctions. But we appreciate our villages and historic towns, because of their charming narrow roads and tight corners, with bad sight lines. Are they really unsafe?

TRAFFIC CALMING BY UNCERTAINTY

The recent Department for Transport document Manual for Streets explains that each local authority should decide for itself what is safe, depending upon the evidence and local circumstances.

The sight lines along the village street (top) are not good. Cars are parked between trees planted in the road. The trees add to the character of the village.

Drivers, including those in passing lorries are careful. The road looks dangerous. They drive more slowly and take extra care and as a result, the road is in fact safe.

NARROW URBAN STREETS

We tested what happens in the narrow streets of Soho. The sight lines, as usually defined, are totally inadequate. But a driver entering from a side road does so very carefully. The parked cars reduce visibility even more.

Because the roads are narrow and the junctions are tight, everyone drives with great care.

This happens in many historic towns. The same principles can therefore be applied to other places where traffic speeds are low and a townscape character based on an intimate human scale needs to be preserved or even created.