



Time to improve this sorry route

There's truth in the old adage that first impressions are lasting ones - and we get only one chance to make it too. What about the impression our home town makes on entering it for the first time?

Initial thoughts are probably of the Guildford Road or the Warnham Road, and both have open, green aspects and a wide advance towards the town centre.

However, let's consider someone arriving by bus, perhaps from the Hop Oast Park and Ride. Our bus centre is an attractive glass building, welcoming and airy. Some might follow the route all wheeled traffic has to take if it penetrates this far towards the elegant Causeway and the enticing Carfax. That route is Blackhorse Way and it does so let us down.

The street itself is the essential access to St Mary's Church and is the only way into the very core of Horsham. It has been an access and service road for over 40 years now and it was vital in enabling vehicles to service the newly pedestrianised West Street. Once it was land by the side of the Manor House, then it took on the service



Blackhorse Way in Horsham

role it still holds to-day; along came housing, small shops, the car park and across it the footway to the Forum.

The end closest to the Carfax is well appointed and pleasing. One side has the old stable building with the clock tower and weather vane reminding us of the expansive house and extensive household which once occupied the site. The houses opposite have greenery in front, gables to the side and colourful front doors.

Once beyond the Forum crossing the street reveals its Jekyll and Hyde character.

The exposed rear of the West Street premises for whose benefit the street was built are a sad and sorry sight. Large commercial bins stand by the roadside, often filled to overflowing, and round about them is litter, black bags, bottles, trolleys and heaps of cardboard boxes.

Some buildings come right out to the highway, others are set back, and this irregularity is worsened by the crude storage of retail waste. What little space is not occupied by rubbish is filled with parked cars, and at night delivery trucks of

gigantic proportions squeeze into the street to unload.

We have to remember that this is the role the street was created for in the first place but as Blackhorse Way has changed in character and been highlighted in importance it's well overdue that the support operations of the road are put under a tactful screen.

Horsham District Council can help by insisting that bins are stored off the highway but they ruefully admit that their powers are limited as this is mainly private land. Private it may be, but there should be pride too with privacy.

Surely the West Street premises would much rather not be known for litter, waste and carelessness, surely some sense of civic pride, some enthusiasm for good corporate citizenship, would prompt joint action to shield the public from the necessary but unsightly mechanics of their businesses?

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town.

It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.