

Giant 'Downtown' Bike

Designed by Basten Leijh, this urban bike concept addresses some of the main issues facing city cyclists. He highlighted key areas to improve such as anti-theft features, storage, and luggage transport.

Two locking mechanisms are integrated into the design of the bike – one is a wheel lock mounted to the frame that locks the back wheel only, the other, detachable handlebars that function as a U-shaped lock. The handlebars are covered in rubber to protect the bike from any damage when they are used as a lock. If the lock is broken then the bike is rendered unusable, without any handlebars.

In response to crowded parking spaces and limited domestic storage areas (hallways etc) the Downtown is designed to fit much narrower spaces than normal. As well as the handlebars being removable, the pedals fold, reducing the width of the parked bike to approximately 20cm.

The Downtown is single-speed and utilises a back pedal braking system so there are a reduced number of components prone to theft or damage. In addition to the anti-theft and storage features the Downtown offers an integrated (and removable) front light, a kickstand and a storage rack.

The functional characteristics of the Downtown Bike have given it a distinctive and iconic look, which highlights the fact that the bike isn't an appealing option for a potential offender. It may make the bike easier to trace and harder to sell on if stolen (until everyone rides them!)

Strengths:

- Provides locking opportunities for both front and back wheels
- Reduces the need for the cyclist to carry extra locks
- Integrated lighting

Weaknesses:

- The protruding nose can make manoeuvrability difficult in crowded pedestrian areas
- No front brake
- The design of the frame and lock can make it awkward to lock both the front wheel and the frame together to a parking stand.

Useful references:

<http://www.bleijh.com/>



All images: Basten Jeijh