

Appendix B Pedestrian and Cycle Photographic Audits

TECHNICAL NOTE

Job Name: Fort Halstead
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Subject: High level audit of existing pedestrian and cycle connections

1. Introduction

This note provides an overview of existing connections to the Fort Halstead site for pedestrians and cyclists.

The site is relatively remote, being located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and sitting at the top of the chalk escarpment.

This note provides a high level audit of the following connections to the site:

- Layout of Crow Drive, the private road which provides the main access into the site from the A224;
- Access towards Knockholt Pound, including the footpath link that runs adjacent to the site to Birchwood Lane;
- Access to Halstead village, which is via Otford Lane;
- Access along the A224 corridor and on to Knockholt station via Old London Road; and
- Access towards Otford via exiting bridleways.

Figure 1 identifies the various footpaths and bridleways that link the site and Figure 2 the various corridors identified above and which are described in this note.

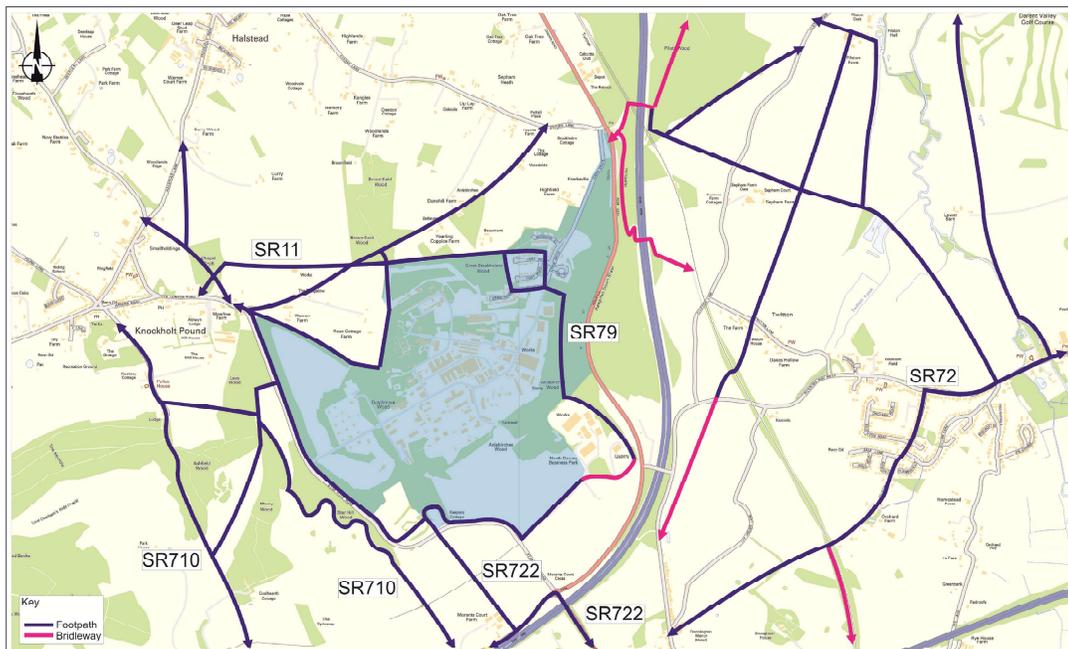


Figure 1: Footpaths and bridleways providing access to Fort Halstead

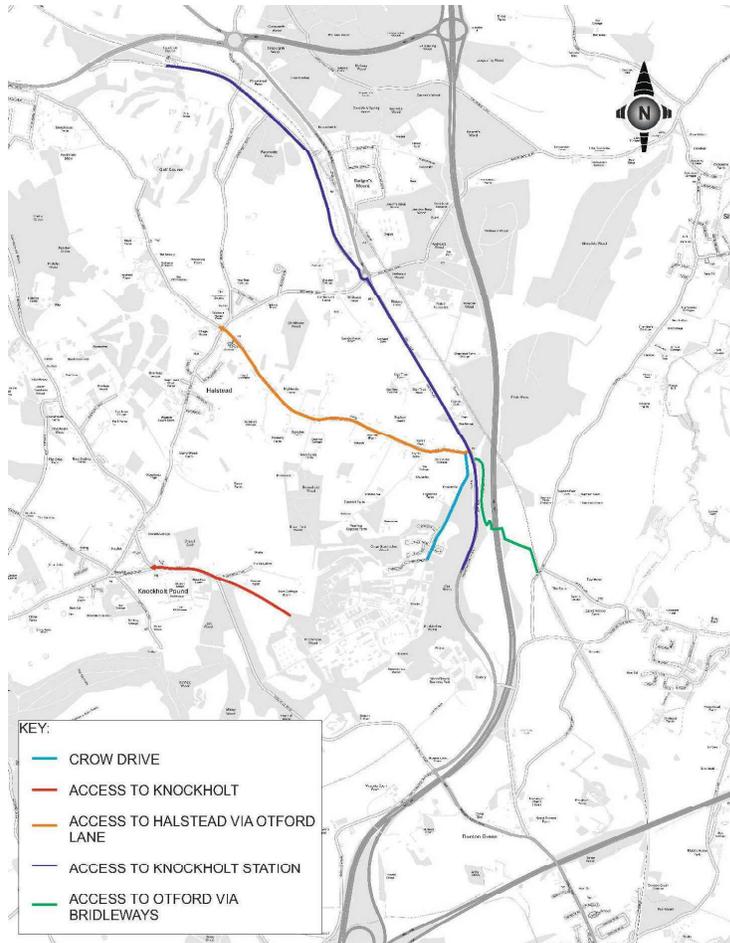


Figure 2: Key pedestrian and cycle corridors

2. Crow Drive

Crow Drive is the main access road to Fort Halstead. Figure 3 provides a selection of photographs showing its layout. It has the following characteristics:

- It is currently a private road but will be adopted through the current development proposals;
- It is signed as a 30 mph road and generally has a width of around 6.2 metres but widens to around 10 metres towards Otford Lane, where it is marked as two lanes towards Otford Lane and one lane inbound towards the development. The road is lit;
- There is a continuous footpath of around 1.2 metres on the south east side of the carriageway. On the north west side there is a parallel track / shared surface road for most of the length, although the final section towards Otford Lane has no facility. Towards the centre of the development, alongside the visitor car park, the track is marked as a shared pedestrian cycleway. The status of the track along the central section of Crow Drive (Photos 7 and 8) is rather unclear; potentially it can be used by motorised traffic although it does not provide direct access to properties (although there are a few accesses over the track);
- There is relatively little frontage activity along Crow Drive. Within the development site there is residential development on either side of Crow Drive but this is set well back from

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the road with no direct access from Crow Drive. There is also some limited commercial development on the north side of the road as well as access to the visitor car park.

- There is an existing zebra crossing over Crow Drive which connects the existing residential developments to the north and south of the road. Generally there is a lack of dropped kerb features; and
- The road consists of a number of long straights with no existing speed restraint measures. It would therefore currently be difficult to enforce the signed 30 mph speed limit.

The development proposals in themselves will not change the nature of this road, except for the proposed signalisation of the A224 / Otford Lane junction, which includes proposals to change the priorities at that junction. There are, however, opportunities to provide a cycle facility on the north west side of this road. Part of this is already signed as such and there is scope for the northern section to be also signed. Drawings family number 26582/001/008 shows how this could be converted to a shared pedestrian / cycleway and how this could be connected to a northbound cycle lane on the northernmost section of the road.

As part of the upgrading of the road to an adoptable standard, it is likely that dropped kerbs and tactile paving will need to be provided where appropriate. It is also likely that suitable speed restraint measures will need to be introduced. Drawing 26582/001/008C also shows a possible chicane feature. Based upon the Kent Design Guide, Crow Drive would then be categorised as a distributor road and would require speed restraint measures at least every 150 metres.



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Figure 3: Crow Drive layout

3. Access to Knockholt Pound

There are two alternatives; via the secondary site access and then north via Star Hill Road to, or using the existing footpath that runs along the northern boundary of the site and links back onto Star Hill Road at the junction of Birchwood Lane. Figure 4 provides photos showing the layout of the two routes:

- Star Hill Road is an unlit rural lane subject to the National speed limit (60 mph) until it enters the village of Knockholt Pound. There are no pedestrian facilities on Star Hill Road.
- The footpath link to Birchwood Lane is currently a grassed track adjacent to the security fence. The final part of the path traverses a small wooded area;

The centre of Knockholt Pound is approximately a 1 mile (1.6 km) walk from the centre of the Halstead development. As part of the development proposals, it is proposed to upgrade the footway to Birchwood Avenue to make it suitable for both pedestrians and cycles.





Figure 4: Access to Knockholt Pound

4. Access to Halstead

Access to Halstead is via Crow Drive and Otford Lane, the latter being quite a narrow unlit country lane. The overall distance is approximately 2.0 miles (3.2 km) and whilst this is within easy cycle distance it is unlikely that people would walk other than for leisure trips.

Figure 5 shows the characteristics of Otford Lane. The top end, within the village, becomes very congested at the start and end of school times.

It is considered that Otford Lane provides a reasonable cycle route. There are no obvious measures that might be taken to improve Otford Lane as a pedestrian or cycle route.



Figure 5: Access to Halstead via Otford Lane

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5. Access to Knockholt station

Knockholt station is approximately 2.9 miles (4.7 km) cycle ride from the centre of Fort Halstead via Crow Drive, A224 London Road and Old London Road:

- The A224 London Road between Otford Lane and the Shacklands roundabout is a single carriageway road of between 8.8 and 10 metres width. It has a footway of approximately 1.2 metres on its east side but no facility on the west. Recently, a 50 mph speed limit was introduced along its length but lighting, except at the junction with Otford lane and at the Shacklands roundabout, is now turned off on an experimental basis. It has limited frontage activity on its east side close to the Otford Lane junction (diner, restaurant and furniture store) and at the northern end there are access points to the Polhill Garden Centre and a large pub / restaurant, which have right turn facilities;
- The Shacklands roundabout is a large 5 arm roundabout (64 metre diameter) of which two are low-trafficked rural lanes providing access to Halstead and Shoreham, respectively.
- Old London Road is a single carriageway road and is subject to a 40 mph speed limit. It has advisory cycle lanes on either side except towards the station where the advisory lane has been replaced by pay and display parking to serve the demand generated by the station. On-street parking overflows into the advisory cycle lane. There are bus stops adjacent to the station access road and cycle parking at the station including secure parking within a lockable shed; although overall capacity of the cycle parking is quite limited.

There is scope to provide on-road cycle lanes on the southern section of the A224 although there may be a need to widen slightly at the very south into the existing highway verge. Further north there is limited scope for improvement since there are right turn bays into the Polhill Garden centre and to the pub; and it is considered that these will need to be retained.

Whilst there is scope to provide diversion lanes at the Shacklands roundabout, it is considered that these are unlikely to be used because most cyclists on this route are 'urban' cyclists who would prefer to remain on road rather than use slower diversion routes.

There is scope to upgrade the existing cycle parking facilities at the Knockholt Station.

Figure 6 shows some photographs of the A224 corridor and access to Knockholt station.





Figure 6: Access along the A224 corridor and on to Knockholt station via Old London Road

6. Polhill to Twitton (towards Otford) bridleway

Figure 7 shows the current bridleway which provides a link to Twitton Lane from the A224 London Road / Otford Lane junction. This potentially provides an alternative, although longer, route towards Otford avoiding Polhill. It is considered that this route would be mainly used as a leisure route by pedestrians and cyclists rather than as a main commuter route. Therefore it is considered that there is limited requirement to upgrade this route other than to provide better connection across the A224 at the Otford lane junction. It would be beneficial to light the tunnel under the M25 motorway.



Figure 7: Access towards Otford using existing bridleways