The Ashton Court missing link
A proposal for a walking and cycling path from the Church Lodge Car Park entrance to Kennel Lodge Road

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It is proposed to create a walking and cycling path along the edge of the Ashton Court Estate from the Church Lodge Car Park entrance to Kennel Lodge Road – a promenade route doubling up as an occasional events access track.

1.1. History

In October 2004 Bristol City Council and the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund entered into a contract for restoring and managing the Ashton Court Estate with a grant of £4.349M. A sizeable part of these monies was used to create two new car parks (near Church Lodge and adjacent to the Mansion House) to accommodate 320 cars. This allowed the main drive through the Park to be closed to all but maintenance traffic.

This has resulted in a tremendous improvement for users of the Park who can now wander and cycle through this beautiful area without conflict with traffic. The plans at that time also provided for an ‘events access track’ along the lower edge of the Smyth Field to ease circulation at times of major festivals, and to ensure that any such activities in this area of the Park did not lead to damage of the grassland as had happened in the past.

The NHF Contract also required the City Council to produce a 10 year Management Plan. This was eventually published as the Strategic Management Plan in May 2005 (Ashton Court Estate Strategic Management Plan Final Draft 2009 Pleydell Smythyman Ltd).

1.2. The Strategic Management Plan and sustainability

Whilst much of the Plan focussed on the Management of this important Grade II listed Historic Parkland and the Central Mansion, sustainable access and transport were considered important issues. SUS08 (p.93) required the implementation of a sustainable transport pan where the Plan prescribes work to investigate, embrace and plan alternative methods of transport to the Estate e.g. via a new cycle Network. Over recent years Bristol City Council has brought forward a number of completed schemes which enhance the ability of quite a wide population to reach the Park by cycle.
1.3. The ongoing programme for delivering dedicated cycle routes to Ashton Court and nearby areas

Ashton Court lies close to the generally level floor of the Avon Valley through Bristol, past the City Centre and on to the Easton area beyond to the east, and along easy terrain towards Nailsea. This whole area is one of the most popular areas for cycling in Bristol. So it is not surprising that measures to provide for the relatively large number of cyclists, and to encourage more, have been focussed here. As a consequence the Ashton Court Estate has become much more accessible to cyclists, and more cycling routes in the area roundabout are currently under construction. In addition the Park boasts a popular mountain bike circuit which is at the top of the escarpment in the far reaches of the Park, so does not concern us here.

The cycling routes in hand can be summarised as follows:

i) The Festival Way was conceived as a route leading from the City Centre, to Ashton Park, and thence after linking through the Park continuing to Long Ashton and Nailsea. As its name implies it was viewed as a way of providing a sustainable transport to the Park, and one which was built to a standard and a capacity which would serve the numbers of people needing to travel to Festivals. This route is now complete, with the exception of the link through the Park.

ii) Bristol City Council have in hand a direct link from the Ashton Avenue Swing Bridge through under the Smeaton Road (Cumberland Road) to the Nova Scotia and thence to the north side of the Floating Harbour via a widened footway across the junction Lock. This will give a second option to the City Centre – the other is the Chocolate Path along the New Cut.

iii) The MetroBus route, currently under construction, will deliver a cycling route from the Ashton Park and Ride to Ashton Avenue Bridge. Whilst this will create an excellent direct route to Ashton Park for all the residents of Ashton Vale it is of a much more utilitarian nature as well.

iv) The Southern Relief Road is under construction and this includes a new dedicated cycle track from Bishopsworth to the Park and Ride site. This will give another area which is currently rather isolated, a traffic free route to the Park.

v) The completion of the Church Lodge and the Mansion House carparks has enabled the main road through the Park to become almost traffic free. This is a most useful resource for cyclists as well as pedestrians, even though the climb is considerable

Taken together these routes represent an extraordinary focus on the Ashton Park area which allows a considerable population in the City to conveniently reach the Park without needing a car, and it can be concluded that the City has gone a long way towards meeting its objectives on Sustainable Transport in its Master Plan for Ashton Park. All that is missing is the central connection to bind all the routes together.

This is the Ashton Park Missing Link.
2. The Ashton Park Missing Link for Cyclists

A number of options have been considered all of which are discussed in some detail in the next chapter.

The existing route via the Church Lodge Drive is extremely circuitous, it runs through the whole length of the Church Lodge car park with its attendant hazards and when coming from Bristol has the steep 1:8 climb up Kennel Lodge Road for a total of 24 metres. Many novice cyclists have to walk this climb (the maximum gradient recommended is 1:20) and the road is narrow with no footways, and a fair amount of traffic. It is not surprising that one rarely sees everyday cyclists here.

The options beside the main road are unpleasant, and the MetroBus route runs through industrial areas far from Ashton Court Estate. The options via the Ashton Park School Playing Fields looked more promising but the requirements of the School (a Cooperative Learning Trust School) would compromise both the quality of the experience of using the path and the parkland in the field behind the Ashton pub.

This leaves the option of following the general line of the New Events Track as the only practical way of making a high quality route which would be memorable and serve to overcome the Ashton Park Missing Link and provide a route to encourage the public to cycle more, or to start cycling.

This Ashton Park option was pursued by the City Council in 2010 as part of the Sustrans Connect 2 Scheme in which they secured a £50m Lottery Grant to make nearly 100 projects to overcome missing links and to make connection from Community to Parks, Stations and other key destinations. The Council developed a scheme and gained planning consent on 20th October 2010. A small part of the route lies in North Somerset and this section was not granted planning consent – largely because the ongoing section below Parsonage Farm was not in place (ref 03/P/1333/F). This is now constructed and built. However North Somerset Council did grant consent for the New Events Track!

In the event the project did not go ahead through failure to secure an agreement with UWE in front of the Bower Ashton Art College, some details which remained to be resolved to the satisfaction of English Heritage, and because the Heritage Lottery Fund had not given their approval for the works as part of the Ashton Park Restoration and Development Plan works.

As the absence of the Ashton Court Missing Link is now a strategic matter which detrimentally affects the growth of cycling in the area, the City Council wishes to revisit the proposal with a view to developing its details to meet previous shortcomings, and to reach the necessary procedural, land and planning consents to allow this route to be approved in this year of Bristol Green Capital 2015.
2.1 The Missing Section at Ashton - Description of Options

Over the last 10 years the Councils have gradually pieced together a high quality cycling route, suitable for families and novices of every age, stretching out to the west from Bristol. Notable sections are the Flax Bourton Greenway parallel to the railway, the Parsonage Farm field edge path to Ashton Road, and the Clangate Sports Ground and Allotments link to the former railway bridge over the Cut. However there is no quality route linking these last two sections and as a consequence the overall route falls far short of its potential and the opportunities for many more local journeys on foot and cycle continue to be frustrated.

This note looks at the options and endeavours to rank them in such a way that decisions can be made as to the way forward.

In 2010 Bristol City Council gave themselves permission to close a section of Ashton Road from Ashton Court Mansion grounds to Bower Ashton Art College. Although there were funds ready for the construction the work did not go ahead. Between 2010 and 2015 there was no progress, but with the redevelopment of UWE’s Bower Ashton site now formalised, and with European Green City in Bristol’s hands indeed it was constructed for this purpose, but as it is largely unused we must conclude that it is unsuitable. It would be impractical to reconstruct all the sections for shared use as they are constrained by the highway structures.

Option 1 Ashton Road and Brunel Way

This is the direct main road route into Bristol. It carries in excess of 40,000 vehicles per day, far in excess of the 1,000 vpd, which is generally considered suitable for family cycling. There is no possibility of making dedicated cycle tracks, as much of the road runs on viaduct with limited space, and the various slip roads would present an unreasonable hazard for cyclists. This is not an option, nor could it be made one.

Option 2 Ashton Road, Blackmoors Lane and the Allotment route

Some people use this at present. There is a shared use pavement along Ashton Road as far as Blackmoors Lane, but all of this runs hard beside the main road, and the last section past the historic gate house is very narrow for shared use and not in any way segregated from Brunel Way. To reach the Allotment route a new signalised crossing would be required across the two legs of the north exit from the roundabout and a strip of land taken from the allotments to reach the lane for the current route to Bristol. The crossing would be an advantage for pupils to reach Ashton Park School but the rest of the route would be fairly grim and not something likely to attract people to cycling. The route bypasses UWE Bower Ashton Art College.

Option 3 is the third option associated with the main road, this time following existing bridges and subways

It is, in theory, possible to follow an existing path over a foot bridge, then beside the main road, under one subway beneath a slip road, beside the main road on a narrow pavement again and then down a long barrow pedestrian ramp to join the planned Metrobus route near the old bowling site. Although this looks direct on the map, no one can be observed using the whole route and none of its structures were designed for shared use. It could offer a walking route to Ashton School, and indeed it was constructed for this purpose, but as it is largely unused we must conclude that it is unsuitable. It would be impractical to reconstruct all the sections for shared use as they are constrained by the highway structures.

Option 4 is the present signed route via the Ashton Court Mansion

This option is used by a few cyclists. It is circuitous, (nearly twice as long as the main road route), but its real disadvantage is the steepness of Kennel Lodge Road (1:8) climbing 24m to the car park.

This is too steep for many people who have to walk. The road is rather narrow and has no footways so cyclists feel vulnerable to passing traffic. This route has been in place as the signed link for a number of years, but has failed to attract any real patronage. It is attractive, it does give access to the Mansion and to UWE, but it suffers fatally from its steep hill and the long diversion through the Church Lodge carpark. The last drawback could be reduced by opening up and providing a smooth sealed surface to the original Ashton Gate entrance drive, but this is not currently being considered.

Option 5 The Smyth Arms footpath to Parklands Road

This option has a number of particulars to commend it. The route is level and direct and quite attractive. A certain amount of alteration would be required to the walls either end, and the route would need to be constructed with a sealed surface. The disadvantage though is that the route bisects the school playing field, and it would need to be fenced off. Ideally it would run in a green lane of ample width, but this would introduce an unwelcome obstruction to the views over the historic parklands from the Mansion House. This route could work quite well and it serves the school, but the loss of playing field area, and the inconvenience of additional fencing and gates would not be acceptable to the school.
**Option 6** A variation of Option 5 is to run around the edge of the playing fields

The path could be fenced off from the playing fields with palisade fencing and it would be shielded from the view of the Mansion House by the existing tree belt. Against this the route would feel rather circuitous, it would feel constricted by fence and planting, it would have no views over the park, and it would potentially be opposed by neighbours including possibly the households along Parklands Road.

There would be a real possibility of objection to the necessary diversion of the existing right of way. As walkers would have to follow the road itself (Parklands Road has no footway) they would most probably divert back into the park and continue along the edge of the SSSI to Kennel Lodge Road. Although the construction would be relatively straightforward forward and the use of Parklands Road would involve no work of real cost, the construction of the detailed link from the playing field to the road would be very difficult as it is doubtful if permission could be gained to demolish the original Estate boundary wall in order to make a sufficiently wide path, even if the wall was to be rebuilt on a new alignment. It would have the advantage of serving the Sixth Form entrance to the school. This route is also slightly shorter than the route via the Art College, by some 90 metres. It would however deny its users any view or the Park and Mansion House, and it would bypass the entrance to the Arts College.

**Option 6a**

A further variation of this route could stay on the grounds of the Park by running along the route described in 7 below, as far as the eastern end of the playing fields and only join the school grounds at that point.

**Option 7** The Ashton Park option

The 2010 proposals ran along the west side of the tree belt at the foot of the fields in front of the Mansion House, and then within the boundary of the UWE site in order to bypass a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It was by far the most attractive of the options from the perspective of the everyday user and is the only one to give the public a very good opportunity to enjoy the Ashton Court parklands. It corresponds with the current popular walk and it passes by the entrance to the Art College. It is a level route and would undoubtedly make for a very pleasant, attractive and popular route. There was wide support for this option in the previous application.

But it does run through the Grade 2 listed parkland and lacked the scrupulous and appropriate detailing to satisfy English Heritage that it did no damage to the parkland.

This general option is detailed in this report as the best route to pursue. The amendments adopted included; designing the route as a Greenway which could be used as an events track on occasion, following a short section of the original Ashton Gate Drive which is of interest, taking the course of the ‘new events track’, set out in the Lottery Application, which went to the east of the trees in the Cart Pond Field so was screened from the Mansion House, dispenses with the need to disturb the parkland to build a shallow visual bank, follows the line of the original farm track around the Park Farm Wood, and runs on the UWE land to bypass the SSSI area including diverting the existing passage of walkers away from the veteran trees, and finally links walkers past the UWE campus on a new footway to bypass the road they have to use at present.

The combination of all these points does create a real asset which is of positive benefit to the historic estate.

**Option 8 via Metrobus service access road**

Work has started on construction the Metrobus Scheme linking the Ashton Gate Park and ride site to the City Centre. Over the whole section shown on the map from the Park and Ride to Ashton Avenue Bridge, there will be a service road alongside the guided bus track. This will be made available to cyclists most of the time. The route could be quite useful in the sense that it will be traffic free and level, but it will largely run adjacent to roads and industrial areas so won’t be attractive, and it will serve neither the Park, the College nor the School.

It will be used by utilitarian cyclist but probably not by those looking for an afternoon out, or wanting to gain confidence in cycling.
This very brief summary of the various options is summarised in Table 1 where the comparative distances are shown from the end of Parsonage Field to the Ashton Avenue Bridge. We conclude by considering the best arrangement to be something similar to the 2010 route to give the public a real view of Ashton Park. The Metrobus route really serves a different part of the City (Ashton Vale – and indeed gives their residents a good direct cycling route to Ashton Park) and is too utilitarian in nature to function as the Festival Way as well as bypassing the Park altogether.

### Table 1. Comparison of options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Access to Art College</th>
<th>Quiet &amp; free from traffic noise</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Attractive Memorable views of Ashton Park and Mansion</th>
<th>Effect on Historic landscape</th>
<th>Improved access to Ashton School</th>
<th>Benefits for walkers</th>
<th>Suitable for wheelchairs</th>
<th>Current usage</th>
<th>Potential usage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
<td>Brunel Way Main Road</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>na</td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Option 2</td>
<td>Ashton Road and Blackmoors Lane</td>
<td>1850</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Option 3</td>
<td>Adjacent to Brunel Way</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Option 4</td>
<td>Signed route past Mansion</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>no change</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Option 5</td>
<td>Existing footpath to Parklands Road</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>no change</td>
<td>no change</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option 6</td>
<td>Running around edge of playing field</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>detour</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 7</td>
<td>Along boundary of Park</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>minimal</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Metrobus route</td>
<td>2100</td>
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<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The options considered in order to resolve the problem of the Ashton Park Missing Link:

- Option 1 - Brunel Way Main Road
- Option 2 - Ashton Road and Blackmoors Lane
- Option 3 - Adjacent to Brunel Way
- Option 4 - Signed route past Mansion
- Option 5 - Existing footpath to Parklands Road
- Option 6 - Running around edge of playing field
- Option 7 - Along boundary of Park
- Option 8 - Metrobus route
3. Summary of the context of proposed path for walkers and cyclists designed for occasional use as an events track

The alignment of the “New Events Track” shown in the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Restoration and Development plan was subtly arranged to minimise any adverse impact upon the landscape. We propose to largely follow this alignment as described in some detail in Chapter 5. The three maps here, all to the same scale, show the proposed path in relationship to earlier schemes.

1917 map showing bank and deer fence, now no longer visible, together with the line of the recent (1990’s) tree belt

Extract from Ashton Court Landscape Pedestrian and Development Plan 24/11/03 showing the proposed New Events Track and the line of the 2010 path proposed

August 2015 revisions to show the path extended past UWE to give a complete traffic free route to Ashton Park, running outside the SSSI along the edge of UWE’s Lawn, following the course of the original farm access road, then continuing centrally through the woodland belt to emerge on the edge of the Cart Dip field before cutting back to Smyth Fields on the line of the former Ashton Drive and finally going down the field edge to reach the entrance gates.

Please bind document this side (print double sided)
4 Summary of issues addressed in developing these revised Greenway Proposals in respect of the sensitivity of the Grade II listed Landscape of Ashton Park

After extensive revisions of the proposed Ashton Park Missing Link, as first proposed in 2010, it is now considered that the proposals offer a positive benefit to the Park, its landscape and its public. This chapter considers these various details which back up this assertion, referenced against the key map here where the route is broken down to a number of sections.

1. The SSSI Area B-C
   It has been agreed with UWE that the path can run along the edge of the College Land so as to bypass the SSSI area. The existing footpath access gate on Kennel Lodge Road will be removed and replaced by a gate at a point on the UWE boundary selected so as to minimise damage from the public walking up to the Mansion and its carpark. This will remove the public from the vicinity of the veteran oak tree and allow the trampled ground to recover.

2. The most visible section of the 2010 path has been relocated behind or within the woodland strip over section E-F with the result that this section will not be visible at all from the Mansion or the Terrace.

3. Minimise the disturbance to the Parkland
   The 2010 proposals envisaged making a low bank to obscure the views of the path. In the new proposals most of the path is completely invisible from the Mansion as it runs through the woodland strip. The only section of the path not completely hidden runs along the line of the former farm access road hard against the field boundary and masked by a combination of overhanging branches and rank grasses where the boundary of Smyth Field is left unmown. A similar effect can be found at a number of locations along the riverside path to Pill.

   - Carefully trim overhanging branches so that there is 3m clearance above the path, but they may hang down beyond.
   - Remove remainders of fence.
   - Allow existing grasses to grow tall as foraging grounds for bats and to hide all view of the path from the Mansion.

   It may be possible to use an unsealed stone surface on this level route. This would be similar to the riverside path to Pill.

   - Carefully trim overhanging branches so that there is 3m clearance above the path, but they may hang down beyond.
   - The shorter grasslands of the Smyth Field. This is where the current walking route runs.

   Looking along the line of the proposed path by the edge of the wood and beneath overhanging boughs.

   3m
   1m

   Looking along the line of the proposed path by the edge of the wood and beneath overhanging boughs.

   Carefully trim overhanging branches so that there is 3m clearance above the path, but they may hang down beyond.

   The shorter grasslands of the Smyth Field. This is where the current walking route runs.

   3m
   1m

   Looking along the line of the proposed path by the edge of the wood and beneath overhanging boughs.

   Carefully trim overhanging branches so that there is 3m clearance above the path, but they may hang down beyond.

   The shorter grasslands of the Smyth Field. This is where the current walking route runs.

   3m
   1m

   Looking along the line of the proposed path by the edge of the wood and beneath overhanging boughs.
4. The path construction will be more rural in nature, with no kerbs or lighting more associated with urban routes.

A second is that the wider stone base will be suitable for the occasional events access vehicle.

5. Fencing

The existing field fencing along this boundary of the Park is in a poor state and certainly not stock proof. The project could refence the whole of Smyth Fields with Ashton Park type railings if this is required.

6. Views

The path will be all but invisible from the Mansion area. The new fencing, if this is required will be no more, or less visible, because it is positioned in a marginally different location to accommodate the path.

7. Walkers and ramblers

At present walkers follow a fairly well defined corridor along the boundary of Smyth Fields. Their route is not constructed but just follows a wide swathe of meadowland. This route will not be affected at all except at the Art College end where the walkers will be directed to join the proposed shared use path rather than continue in the vicinity of veteran trees.

The proposed path will provide an all-weather surface along much the same corridor, and this will offer a dry alternative when the ground and grass is wet. At least a proportion of current walkers may use this resulting in less damage to the grassland.

The proposed path will create a dry all weather circular route (returning via the Mansion). This will complement the generally there and back winter routes which exist in the Park at present. This will be of positive advantage to less able people, and also to those with buggies etc. This might make the Church Lodge Car Park more attractive a location to park up at, thereby reducing pressure on the Mansion Car Park.
This all-weather path should encourage more people to walk along this boundary of the park thence gain a view of the main frontage of the Mansion seen across the Parkland – a view which is currently seen by only a few.

A further benefit for pedestrians, in particular, will be the completion of a path separated from traffic along Kennel Lodge Road. Here at present pedestrians have to walk in the road along with vehicular traffic. This will be delivered by negotiation with UWE as part of a package of measures including a strip off their lawn on the north side so as to enable the path and the public to move away from the veteran trees.

Overall walkers gain a number of real benefits from these proposals, without losing any of their current routes.

8. The Parkland and gardens

Historic England consider that the proposed path will provide an unwelcome line on the plan of the Park. It is true that the path will be a presence on the ground, but it will be all but impossible to be seen by any but people travelling along its route.

A moderate growth of grass beside the path will hide its surface from the Mansion and its gardens. Only the fence will be visible if this is required, and this will be no different to whatever fence is required to make Smyth Field stock proof. Equally it will be no more visible when viewed from any distance. So other than a line on the map, the path is considered to have a negligible impact in this respect.

The proposed path will have a measurable positive effect by enabling the public to bypass the SSSI ground around the veteran oaks.

The project could bring to the attention of the public the function of the densely planted evergreen wood shielding the Park Farm complex, and it will ‘restore’ the route of the farm access road with the remains of its boundary wall and isolated ash tree which must have been planted near its gate.

Further along the public can appreciate the cart wheel dip pond which is currently situated in a little visited part of the park, and end where the line of the original Drive can be picked up and followed.

In addition the general public will be able to enjoy a good view of the Park and Mansion from its southerly aspect throughout the year.
Section A - B: Footpath past UWE’s Campus along Kennel Lodge Road

At present pedestrians approaching the Park have to walk along Kennel Lodge Road as there is no footpath once past the students’ entrance. Now that the UWE redevelopment plans are finalised, it will be possible to provide a separate footway in the frontage here so as to complete a walking route from the bus stop on Clanage Road, and Bristol.

Plan of UWE along Kennel Lodge Road with a clear pedestrian route added and a traffic free piazza in front of college entrance

Path to run through grass area. Silver birch tree can remain. And large rocks currently preventing car parking can be removed?
Over this section the Greenway alone will continue along the edge of the UWE Campus land to Kennel Lodge Road. The UWE section will be situated behind the existing fence and will be invisible from the Mansion. We propose to remove the existing wicket gate into the Park and provide a new one at a convenient point along the UWE fencing or even at the line of the original track up from Park Farm. This will take the public away from the veteran tree (where the ground is trampled down as can be seen in the photograph) and even away from the whole of the SSSI site.

1. Existing road to the Mansion House Carpark.
2. Cyclists to continue via Kennel Lodge Road to UWE entrance and Bristol. Pedestrians to be catered for with new footpath in the refurbishment of Bower Ashton College.
3. Existing gates across Drive unchanged.
4. Remove existing wicket gate and extend existing railings so as to minimise damage to veteran trees.
5. UWE buildings and café looking out over the grass.
7. Position of new kissing gate to be selected so as to cause the least damage possible for the public walking across the field to the Mansion House. This could even be at point 10 so that the public avoid the SSSI altogether.
8. New Ashton Park railings, 1.2m high all through the UWE lands.
9. Event access vehicles pass on via existing woodyard access track.
10. Path to pass beneath Holm Oak which should be retained. Use cellular tree protection here and follow through to Kennel Lodge Road with no dig solution.
Section C – D: Woodland Strip to Park Farm Entrance

The Ashton Court missing link • A proposal for a walking and cycling path from the Church Lodge Car Park entrance to Kennel Lodge Road  
John Grimshaw 2015

The Greenway would depart slightly from the originally proposed events track route in that it could follow and pick up the alignment of the original farm track from Park Farm to Park (shown on the 1917 map). This would run under the eaves of the wood which was planted to hide the buildings of the Park Farm. We have not found any photograph showing exactly what this track was like but it may have been fairly substantial as it appears that this was the main route through the Smyth Fields to all the fields south of the Farm. The existing dilapidated fence would be removed and replaced by new Ashton Park railings if required.

11. Reinforce crossing from farmyard which is used for events such as the Balloon Fiesta.

12. The Greenway now follows the line of the original farm access road close to the eaves of the wood.

13. The cross section shows how the path would be positioned under the sweeping branches from the adjacent trees. The lower ones would be lopped to give a height of 3m above the path but they could drop lower on the field side. The effect will be very similar to sections of the Riverside path to Pill. The existing wide band of tall grasses and cow parsley would be retained as foraging for bats and to prevent any view of the path from the Mansion. The remains of the fence would be removed and replaced with Park railings or similar if required.

14. At this point the remains of the track boundary wall are visible. This would be an opportunity for an information board explains the role of the Wood and the farm track. The isolated ash tree is a feature.

15. The Greenway would cross the existing path at its central point before continuing through the woodland strip.
Section D - E: The School Field Tree Belt - A Woodland Promenade

Following a walk through with the Avon Gardens Trust representatives it was agreed that the existing hedges must remain to hide the views of the playing fields, and that the trees now 20 years old or more need thinning, and that if the path was to run approximately centrally down this woodland strip it would be invisible from the Mansion and separate from the school fields. This arrangement is shown in the cross section here.

16. The path to run centrally through the woodland strip. Some thinning of trees is required and the exact line of the route to be agreed in a walk through.

The path would be constructed on root guard mesh throughout this section. A certain amount of additional tree planting could be done if this is required

17. Renew the school fence in sheep mesh and one smooth wire so as to prevent dogs wandering out onto the pitches

17A The existing fence is poor but it is backed up by a dense hedge so the combination is probably stock proof and it can be left unless a renewal is required.

18. This link to be closed off to minimise the public walking across the school playing fields. But maintain the entrance into the Park so that the woodland walk can be joined halfway along.

19. The line of the path to take account of feature trees which predate the planting of this woodland belt.

The existing trees should be carefully thinned so as to allow selected specimens to flourish and to grow higher so as to mask views of the school and other buildings. And so as to create a clear passage for the path. This should aim to be approximately 4m wide between tree trunk

On the school side of the tree belt there are a few much old trees which must have stood around in the Parkland before the school came into being

Again maintain the ‘hedge’ on this side of the walk

School playing fields

Replace the existing dilapidated fence with an agricultural fence comprising a 7 wire sheep mesh and one smooth top wire

Link to 6th Form College

At present there is an informal access to the school playing fields at this point. This could be made the main, or the only access, to Parkland Road and if provided with a narrow hard surface would make a useful way through to the Sixth Form entrance to Ashton School. These low levels of usage would mean that the narrow passage between masonry walls to the road would be sufficient. A 1.2m wide path would be a useful link here, but its narrow width would emphasise the secondary nature of this link.

1. Existing connecting path
2. Surface a narrow 1.2m wide path along the edge of the grass and away from the pitches.
   This will keep most people to the path.
3. Narrow link between walls to Parklands Road.
4. 6th Form College entrance.
Sections E-F: The Cart Wheel Pond Field and F-G The link to the Ashton Lodge Car Park exit

20. Continue running down the centre line of the woodland strip to emerge at the break in the woodland.

21. As this field is used for caravans and the like during the Balloon Festival this section of the path should be built to a higher standard and reinforced to take the vehicles crossing back and forth.

22. The Cart Wheel Pond is an interesting feature which deserves an explanatory board - perhaps with a picture of Constable’s Hay Wain?

23. The path can now run along the edge of Smyth Field as the Mansion is all but invisible in the distance and hidden by trees. If this area needs to be grazed then the style of fencing can be agreed at that time.

24. Join the Car Park road via the existing gates.

25. Route continues via completed Church Farm path to Long Ashton.
6. Typical Construction Details

Path construction details

The 2010 proposals were rather urban in nature with extensive use of concrete and timber kerb edges. We propose to support the edges of the path by means of a wider stone base, rather than kerbs. This will have the double advantage of providing a visually less formal path edge, and giving support to occasional heavy vehicles which might otherwise damage any kerbs.

Where necessary, past selected trees and other sensitive areas, the path will be constructed without excavation, so its arrangement would be slightly different as shown below. These 'no dig' sections could either utilise a 'treeguard' mesh, or not, depending on the circumstances.

Lighting the Greenway path

A matter about which concern was raised was the question of lighting. There would be no street lighting on this path, either now or in the future. It may however be useful to demark its edges or centre line by means of small solar studs such as those already used on the path by the Ashton Pumping Station.
Appendix: List of supporting documents

A great deal of work was done in preparing supporting documents. Most of these remain equally valid for the revised Greenway proposals, but each will be reviewed and extended as necessary.

Ashton Court Estate; Back to the Future – Restoration and Development Plan by Scott Wilson supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This document set out actions for restoring the landscape and views, including managing the tree belt against the school playing fields to form clumps so as to allow views, and creating an events access track so as to enhance circulation.

Ashton Court Estate - Strategic Management Plan by Pleydell Smithyman Limited, May 2009

Ashton Court Cycle Link - Design, Access and Heritage Statement by Martin Deaville, May 2010

This document included an Arboriculture Report and an Archaeological report.


Planning Application for a new pedestrian and cycling facility along the eastern Boundary of the Ashton Court Estate.; application 10/02182/FB, granted subject to conditions 20.10.10