

Response by Cycle Winchester to Winchester School of Art (WSA) planning application

Reference: 26/00866/FUL Date 26/05/2026

Address: Art Rooms Winchester School of Art, Park Avenue, Winchester

Case Officer: Cameron Finch

Cycle Winchester is the cycling advocacy group for the Winchester area. It campaigns for better infrastructure to facilitate everyday journeys by bike as well as engaging with residents to encourage more people to consider switching transport modes. It has more than 100 members plus over 100 Facebook and 900 Instagram followers. High levels of community engagement with Cycle Winchester organised events (bikes buses, Mass Ride) indicate a real appetite for changes which make it possible for more people to consider using the bike for more everyday journeys.

Cycle Winchester **objects** to this application on the grounds that it fails to comply with adopted policies of Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council, including:

The Winchester City Council Local Plan 2020 – 2040.

The current version of the Local Plan was adopted 1 month before the date of this application, so it is applicable here. It requires:

- a) good permeability for cycling and walking across the site;
- b) consultation with groups that focus on walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure in Winchester;
- c) adequate analysis of the sustainable transport needs of users of the site, and the neighbouring community (our emphasis);
- d) adequate solutions to address those needs.

The Transport Assessment provided as part of this application fails to reflect the City's Strategic Policy T1 "Sustainable and Active Transport and Travel" in that it does not **quantify** the amount and type of travel and fails to prioritise: the integration of sustainable and active travel routes into the layout with connections to the wider network.

This policy also states that there is a need for safe, attractive, secure and convenient ways that encourage all users, including those with disabilities and reduced mobility, to use more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, wheeling, cycling, buses and as appropriate, the rail network, at every stage of the development;

The application also fails to comply with crucial transport-related strategies and plans adopted by Hampshire County Council *and* Winchester City Council:

Winchester Movement Strategy (WMS)

Besides the general requirements of the WMS, a key document here is the *Friarsgate, Union Street and Upper Brook Street Highway Changes – Feasibility Study* (2022) which was endorsed at the time by University of Southampton (UoS) representatives and which depends on a public route through the WSA site.

Although there is no immediate prospect of the full development of this plan (including a toucan crossing of North Walls outside the new WSA entrance and a cyclepath connecting through to Easton Lane) it remains part of the long-term aim. The WSA element of it can be delivered now and it is

reasonable to expect a contribution from the university towards the future development of the crossing and cycle route A on the plan. See Fig. 1

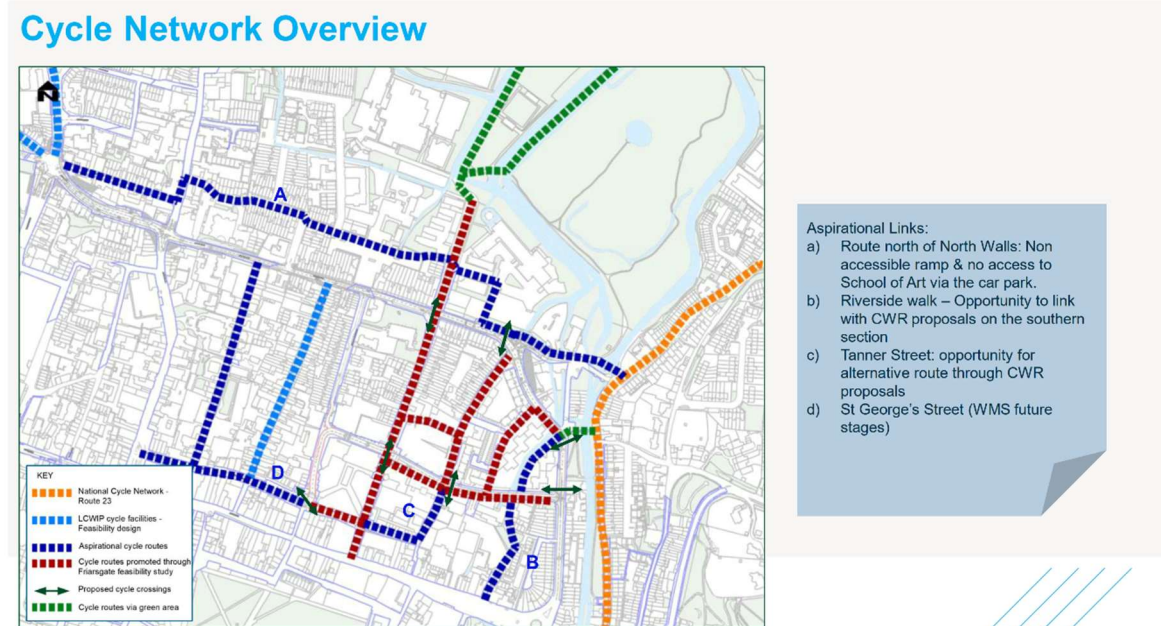


Figure 1: cycle network overview from WMS 2022 report. Note blue line through WSA site.

City of Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

The LCWIP for the City of Winchester identifies the need for greater permeability for cyclists and walkers within the city. North Walls is one-way west to east, so cyclists cannot safely access Park Avenue and the wider cycle network from the Easton Lane direction.

A walking, wheeling and cycling route through the site from North Walls to Park Avenue would allow that movement by both students (connecting with Erasmus Park) and the wider public. It would, also link with River Park and the wider cycle network as well as providing a crucial part of a cycle route to Capital House (now owned by UoS) and the railway station

This route provides a strategic connection enabling a low-traffic alternative to North Walls between:

- Winnall and the railway station,
- Winnall and River Park and the Barton Line, linking onward to sports clubs, Hyde, Abbots Barton and Kings Barton,
- Winnall and St Bede school;
- Winnall and Westgate school (Winnall is in the Westgate catchment)
- and between Winnall and the city centre via the existing Park Avenue/Middle Brook Street route.

It would form part of LCWIP Route 300, following a line parallel to North Walls and is currently considered more easily deliverable than a cycle route along North Walls itself. See Figure 2

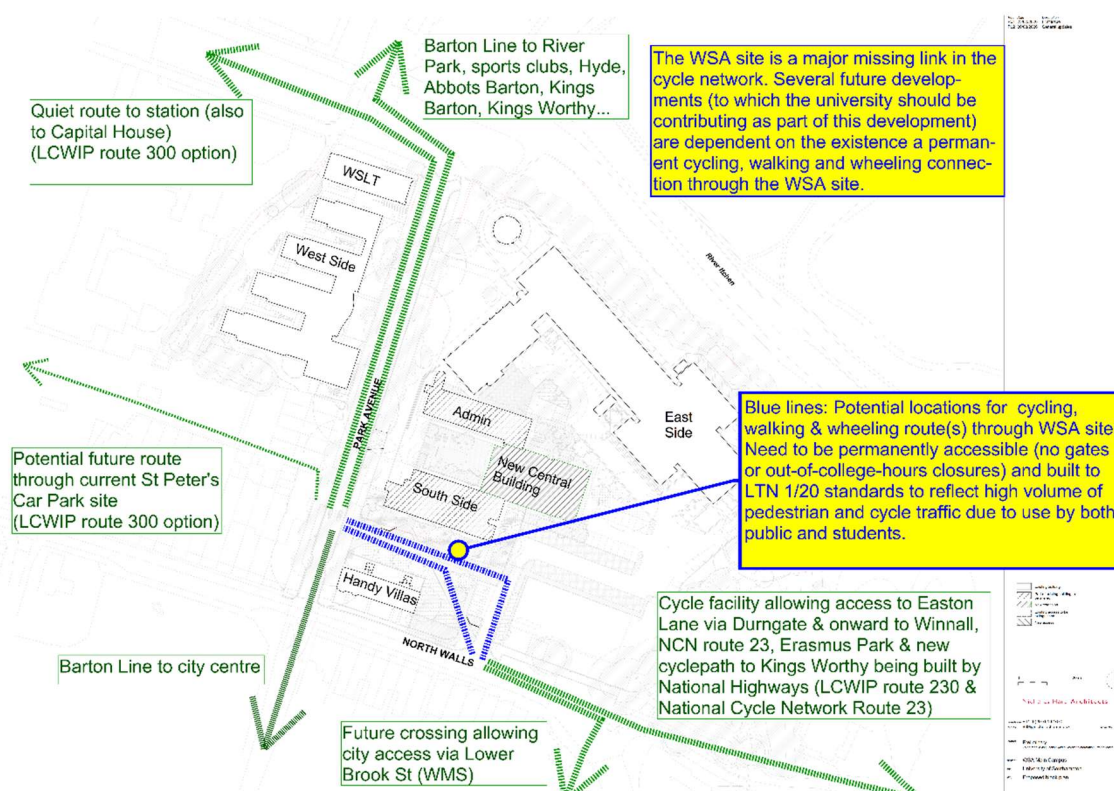


Figure 2: onward routes enabled by connection through WSA site

Based on the existing site plan, it appears feasible to provide this route as part of this application and so aid both students and the wider public. The site plan shows a pedestrian route behind Handy Villas (owned by UoS) leading to destinations within the site but it is not clear whether this exits onto Park Avenue: some diagrams still show a wall here, while no diagram in the application shows this entrance clearly.

There is ample width here to provide a LTN 1/20 compliant cycleway/footway for cyclists and pedestrians from North Walls to Park Avenue.

If there is perceived to be a security risk, this could be mitigated as part of the design, e.g. low-level lighting but on the issue of security, we note that:

- Park Avenue is already a public highway through the middle of the WSA campus. This is well-used by local pedestrians and cyclists, and there is no stated intention to close it off.
- the main UoS campus at Highfield is, and has long been, permeable to the public and this does not appear to cause undue concern.

Failure to provide this route as part of this development will make it impossible to achieve a LTN 1/20 compliant cycle route that meets these objectives and so fail to provide users with a safe alternative to motorised transport for both students, staff and the wider public. To complete this route would only require a short section of shared cycleway/footway from Easton Lane to the entrance to WSA.

This route would also reduce use by students and the public of North Walls, delivering additional public benefit because:

- North Walls has high levels of vehicular traffic and is heavily polluted.
- Pavements are very narrow, particularly for those with a disability.

Parking

An additional 52 cycle parking spaces are proposed. This is insufficient for even the low number of expected cyclists cited in the Transport Assessment. In addition, no cyclable route is provided to enable students, staff and visitors to reach the cycle parking.

In contrast, the application provides significant additional on-site car parking whereas existing City and County policies require the prioritisation of walking, wheeling and cycling in order to reduce the need for motor vehicles to access the City Centre and WSA by private motor car.

Conclusion

Cycle Winchester has endeavoured to engage with the UoS with regard to this application but without success. It urges Winchester City Council, as planning authority and Hampshire County Council as highway authority to ensure that the lack of permeability through the site for both pedestrians and cyclists is remedied before any permission is granted. They should also require UoS to consult with groups that focus on walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure in Winchester so that the required permeability can be delivered.

Response submitted by Sue Coles on behalf of Cycle Winchester

hello@cyclewinchester.org.uk