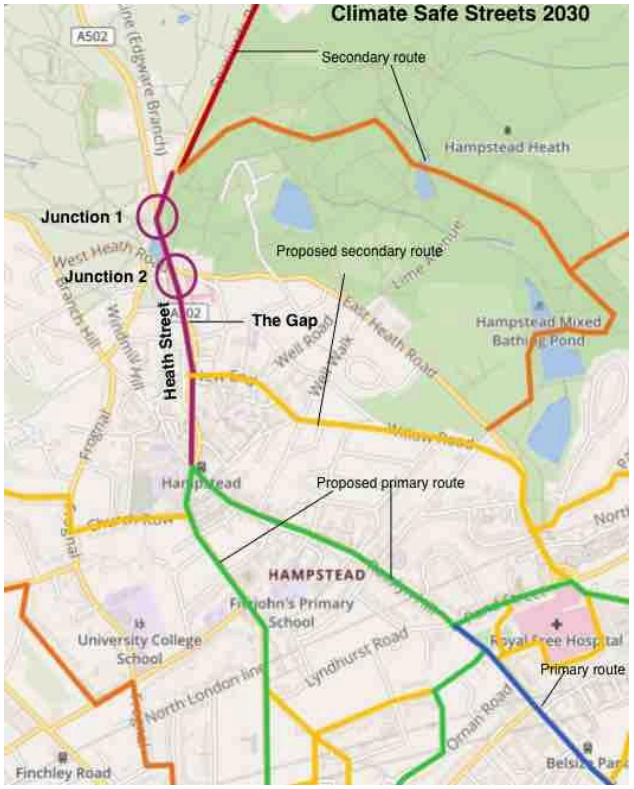
The Whitestone Pond Report

The missing link between Spaniards Road and Rosslyn Hill

Camden Cycling Campaign August 2024



For the December 2023 meeting with Camden officers, CCC proposed this agenda item:

There is a gap in the Cycling Action Plan between Spaniards Road and Rosslyn Hill including the Whitestone Pond junctions.

To quote from the minutes (SM =Sam Margolis, GC = George Coulouris)

SM: Doing isolated bits doesn't make sense. Also this 'gap' is difficult because of the narrowness of Heath Street and few parallel roads are available.

GC: suggest an onsite meeting.

SM: suggests that CCC do a site visit and make recommendations.

The map on the left shows this gap as a purple line; while purple circles indicate the two junctions.

Site visit. The site visit organised by Steven Edwards was held on 20 March 2024 and attended by him and John Chamberlain.

Scope

Our study discusses the following issues:

1. Spaniards Road: linking the secondary routes to Junction 1.
2. Safe cycling through Junction 1.
3. The feasibility of providing protected cycle infrastructure along Heath Street, with alternatives.
4. Whitestone Walk and Lower Terrace.
5. Suggested changes to Junction 2.
6. Facilitating connections e.g. with parallel crossings.
7. Other Opportunities



1. Spaniards Road

The red arrow indicates the meeting of the two secondary routes: the Spaniards Road cycle path and the path over the Heath.

A parallel crossing would enable cyclists from the south to cross over Spaniards Road and join either of these paths. It would also be useful for bus passengers using the two bus stops.

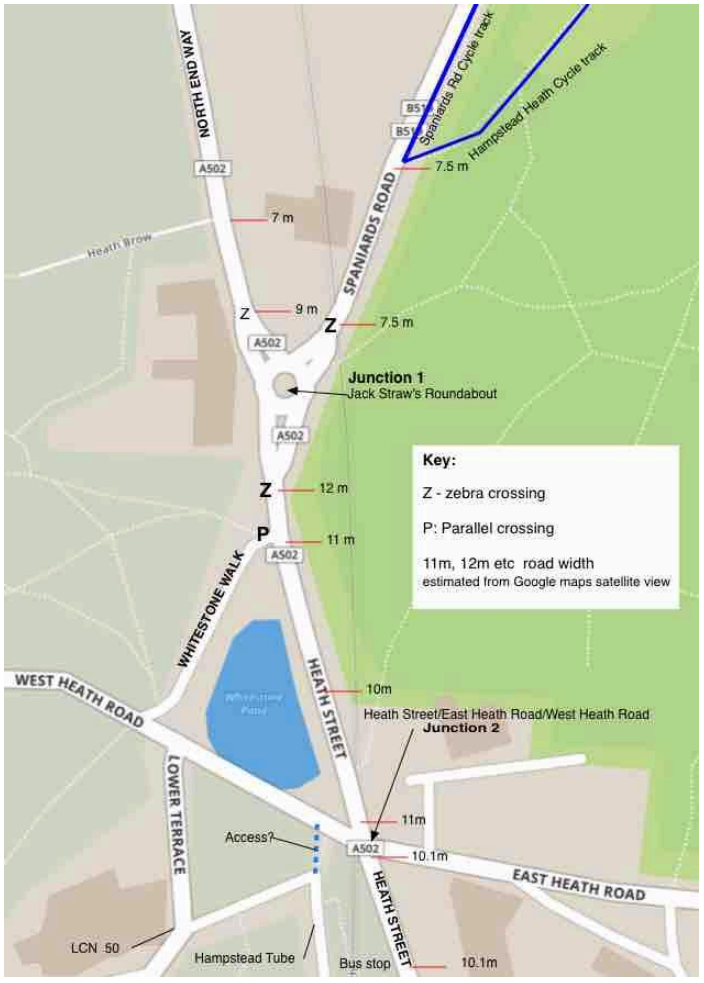
The width of this section of Spaniards Road is a little over 7m so we recognise that there isn't enough room to provide cycle lanes in the carriageway, but there is room for a new cycle lane on the northwest side if the vegetation were cut back. In the long term this could be extended as far as Spaniards End.

The existing cycle lane on the southeast side could be extended to the roundabout or, failing this, the wide footway could be explicitly marked for shared use (as is currently happening anyway for southbound cyclists).

2. Safe cycling through Junction 1 (Heath Street / North End Way / Spaniards Road)

Options:

- Keep the Mini Roundabout which is suitable only for fit, fast cyclists.
- Change to a T-junction. But two of the approaches are too narrow to separate cycles in the signal stages.
- Use a Dutch Roundabout design such as seen here. The layout is similar, in that Drayton Park and Benwell Road are not perpendicular. See Appendix 1.
- For southbound cycles, the cycle lane on Spaniards Road could be extended as a bypass round the junction but this would not provide a safe northbound route unless it were made wide enough for two-way cycling, which might cause additional pedestrian conflict.



3. Heath Street

Heath Street continues the A502 from Camden Town via Haverstock Hill.

The map shows the widths of Heath Street from Junction 1 down to the Northbound Bus Stop to the south of Junction 2.

The minimum carriageway width is 10m which could accommodate 2x3.25 motor lanes and 2x1.75 cycle lanes.

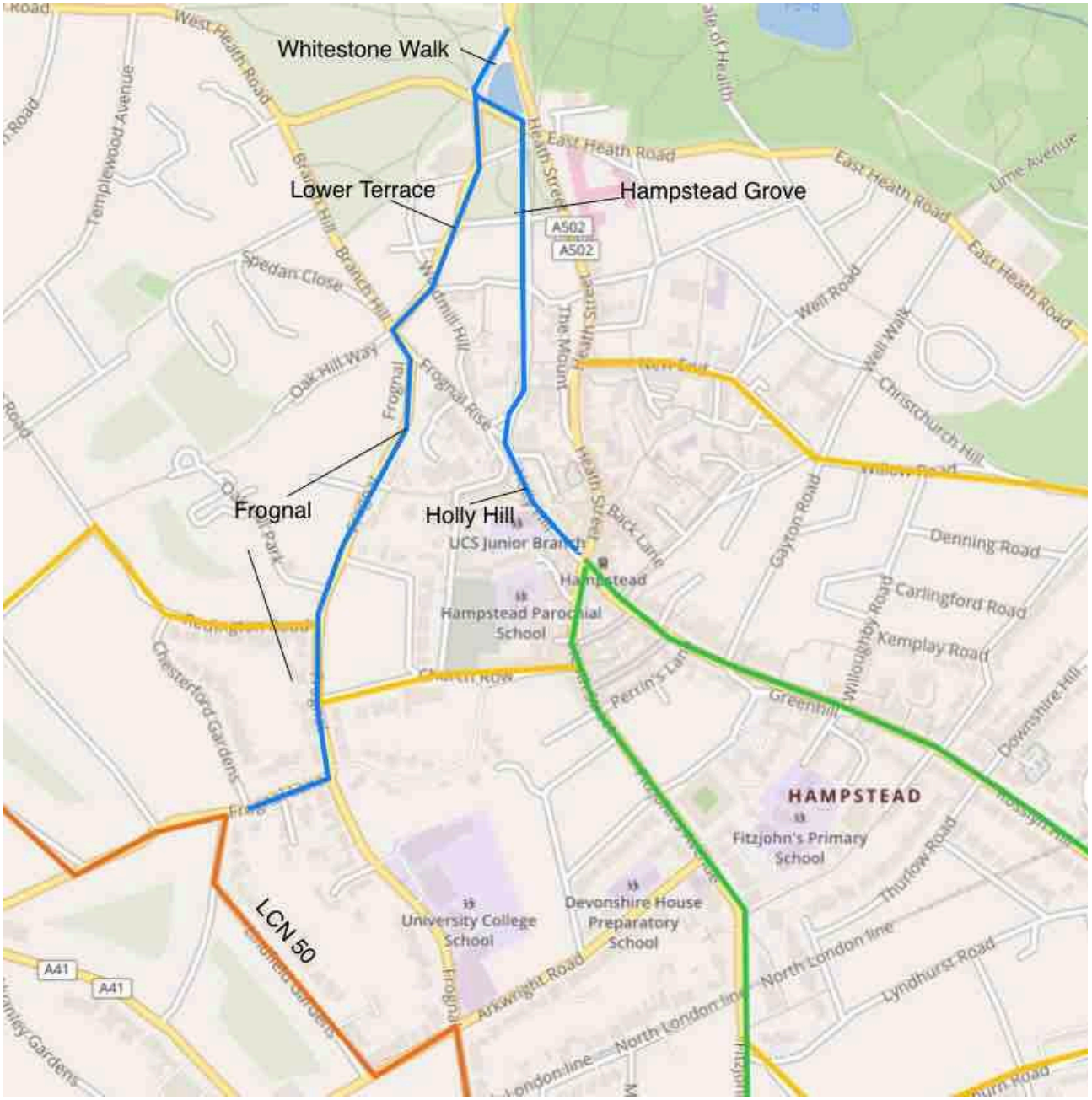
Therefore we suggest that it is feasible to emulate the recent changes at Haverstock Hill by reducing the number of motor traffic lanes to one in each direction and making motor vehicles wait behind buses at Bus Stops.

There is room for 2m wide cycle lanes for most of the way between Junction 1 and Junction 2.

South of the bus stop, Heath Street is too narrow for cycle lanes but too busy to promote as a quiet route. We therefore suggest that cyclists should use Whitestone Walk to access alternative routes to and from West Heath Road (see the map below):

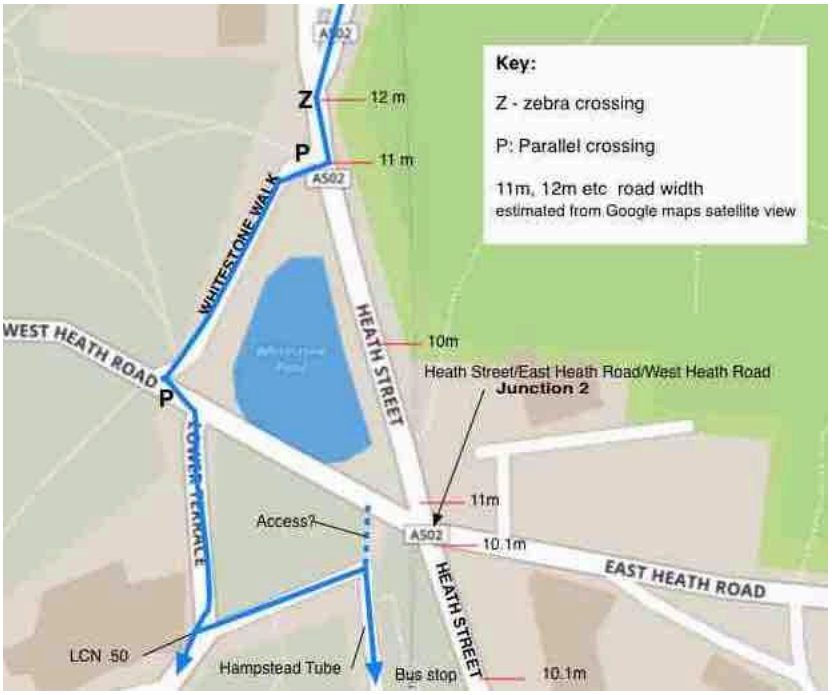
- To Hampstead Tube Station via Hampstead Grove and Holly Hill, which already have reasonably low traffic levels. This would need contraflow and/or modal filters.
- Via a filtered Lower Terrace and Frognal to join the zig-zag route parallel to Finchley Road (formerly known as LCN 50).

Filtering of Whitestone Walk to remove motor vehicles would be needed (see Section 4).



Alternative routes south of Whitestone Pond

4. Whitestone Walk and Lower Terrace



Whitestone Walk is currently used as part of Junction 2 as follows:

- Vehicles from West Heath Road heading north make left turns into Whitestone Walk as left turns are prohibited at Junction 2.
- Vehicles from the north heading to West Heath Road make right turns into Whitestone Walk as right turns are prohibited at Junction 2.

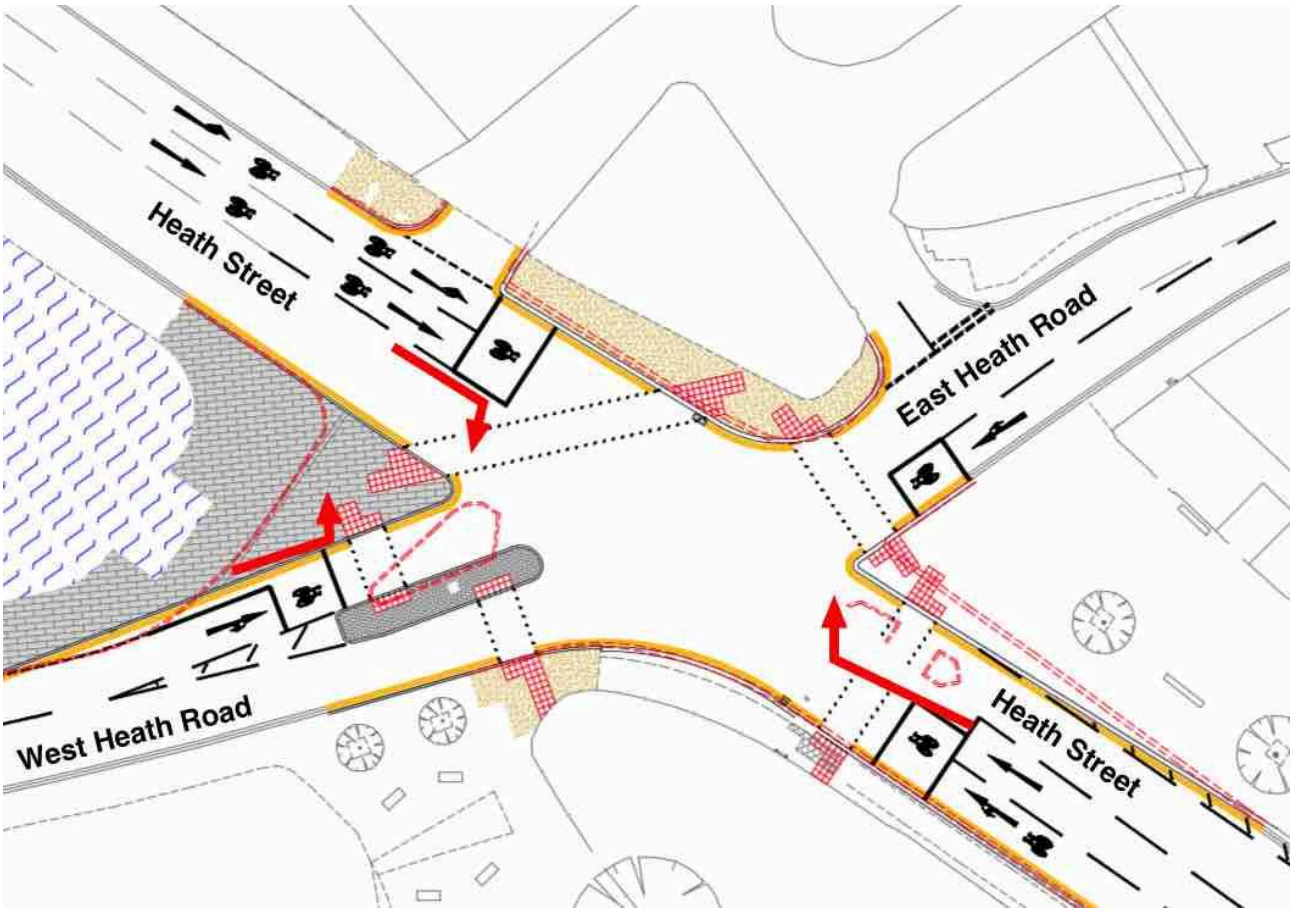
This arrangement turns the Whitestone pond area from a potential oasis of calm into a traffic-dominated expanse of concrete and tarmac.

As explained above in Section 3, due to the narrowness of Heath Street south of Junction 2, an alternative route on a quiet road is needed. Whitestone Walk should be narrowed and greened and used only for walking and cycling. Safe parallel crossings should be provided where Whitestone Walk meets Heath Street and at West Heath Road.

Lower Terrace. At the time of the site visit this road was closed for road works, and the benefits were clear. On a more recent visit, large numbers of motor vehicles were seen emerging from Lower Terrace, thus increasing the congestion on this section of West Heath Road. We therefore suggest that Lower Terrace be filtered to prevent through-motor traffic. This would provide a link both to Hampstead Grove and to Frognal and the former LCN 50 (see above) as well as to the proposed secondary route on Church Row/Reddington Road.

Access from Whitestone Walk to the proposed quiet routes: Lower Terrace and Whitestone Walk are almost opposite one another where they intersect West Heath Road. There is an opportunity to create a parallel crossing here (particularly if the former is closed at this junction). This may also be the optimum route connecting to Hampstead Grove.

5. Changes needed at Junction 2 (Heath Street/West Heath Road/East Heath Road)



On the above map, red arrows indicate the new turns that may have to be introduced at Junction 2 to compensate for the removal of the motor vehicle routes via Whitestone Walk.

Although most cycle journeys will go via Whitestone Walk, people using East Heath Road will need to use Junction 2. All efforts need to be made to eliminate left hook risks, particularly on West Heath Road.

6. Facilitating connections e.g. with parallel crossings

We suggest the following in addition to the Spaniards Road crossing (see 1 above). These and the following suggestions are supported by London Living Streets:

- Across Heath Street to provide pedestrian and cycle access to Whitestone Walk.
- Across West Heath Road between Whitestone Walk and Lower Terrace.
- Across Heath Street to provide pedestrian and cycle access to New End (which is a proposed secondary route and already has a School Street).

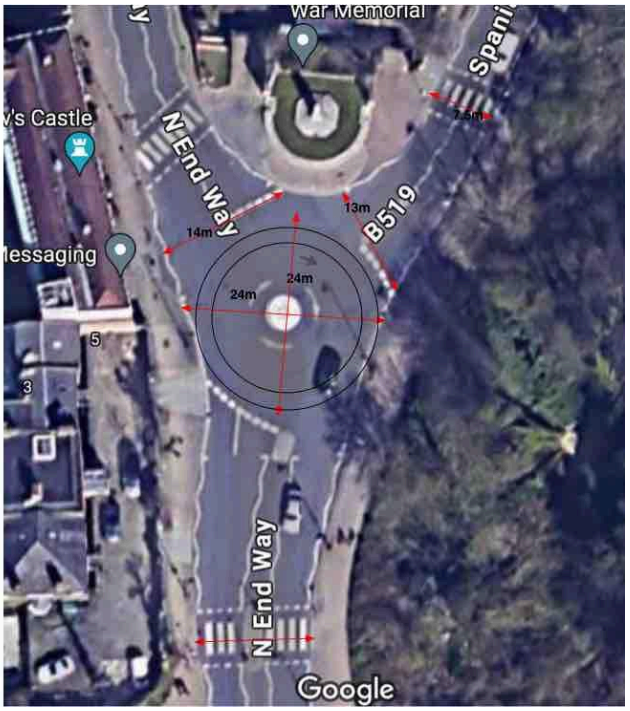
7. Other Opportunities

- Planting/greening at all junctions
- A noticeboard explaining some history and geography of the area and the convergence of three main rivers (now underground). This would also add to the appeal of this being a walking or cycling destination/stop-off point.
- Adding parallel cycle crossings to the existing Zebras.

Appendix 1

A comparison of the Drayton Park roundabout layout and the space at Junction 1.





Drayton Park has no bus route whereas the 210 double-decker buses have to turn between Spaniards Road and North End Way and in so doing go over the centre circle which is flush with the road. Drayton Park has a slightly raised circular area in the middle of the roundabout but this would not be feasible at Junction 1.

At Junction 1 there appears to be room to build segregated cycle lanes around the edges of a central area with a 20m diameter.

At Drayton Park cyclists cross the side roads on parallel crossings. Something similar could be done at Junction 1 with the parallel crossings on Spaniards Road and North End Road much closer to the roundabout.

Steven Edwards, Jean Dollimore, John Chamberlain

28th August 2024