

The Colchester Orbital Project

Barrier Audit (obstacles to access on the Orbital)

(2016-2017)



The Orbital map can be seen here: [The Colchester Orbital Online Map](#) (obstacles indicated in red)

Explanatory notes

The Colchester Orbital is a 14-15 mile circular walk/cycle route around the periphery of the town, linking some of the our loveliest green spaces and pathway networks.

The Orbital covers a wide range of terrain over its length, with mixed accessibility on this account. Nonetheless an important aspect of the project has been the intention that it should – wherever possible - appeal to and be accessed by the fullest range of users, including:

- Ambulant disabled and older walkers (mobility-restricted)
- Chair users, including manual/independent; manual/assisted; motorized.
- Trikes, all-terrain chairs and mobility scooters.
- Families with push-chairs / young children

Route development has given consideration at all stages to the requirements of the above groups, balanced by an understanding that there will be some access limitations that cannot easily be addressed in countryside settings.

The project's approach to access

1. Choices made over route trajectory seek to maximize inclusivity wherever possible by opting for routes that enable all/most users to take the same path, *except* where this is a significant compromise on the route preferred for reasons of environmental/green interest i.e. the project's primary aims. Where two

route alternatives offer equivalent environmental interest, the more accessible alternative has been chosen, or both alternatives retained (see Orbital East and West, which offer A&B route options).

2. Where the preferred route entails access limitations, and no alternative green route exists, the most accessible alternative route will be identified in any Orbital walk guide, and directions given.
3. Wherever obstacles occur on the Orbital, efforts will be made to remove or improve as appropriate.

The nature of obstacles, and barrier removal

‘Obstacles’ comprise anything likely to either create an *absolute barrier* to access for some walkers or chair users, or to *impede full/independent* access. The list below includes a full spectrum of ‘barrier’ types and degrees of inconvenience. Some (e.g. 1) may hardly be considered barriers at all, but raise some issues for fully inclusive, independent access and are therefore included for consideration nonetheless (can they be improved? Are there design lessons for the future?).

Some barriers are more obviously necessary than others, and the principle of fully inclusive access is therefore always weighed against other functional concerns (obvious examples being the need to contain livestock or warn of an approaching busy road).

Whilst barriers may be naturally-occurring or man-made, this audit is primarily concerned with the latter (e.g. fences, stiles, locked gates, chicanes, kissing gates) since these may i) effectively prohibit access along public rights of way, and ii) offer greater scope for removal or redesign than naturally occurring barriers. Note, barriers constructed intentionally to restrict or slow-down some users e.g. cycle barriers, are still considered potential ‘obstacles’ here, if their design unintentionally impedes other classes of user.

Where barriers exist on the Orbital, the project is committed to working with others (e.g. ECC/CBC) to:

- a) Remove where possible e.g. where older barriers continue to exist without current purpose.
- b) Replace with accessible alternatives e.g. where a barrier continues to be necessary but an accessible alternative could be substituted.
- c) Improve/maximize access e.g. where a barrier continues to be necessary but no fully accessible alternative is possible.

The legal imperative and associated design guidance

The removal, redesign or improvement of barriers, jointly referred to here as *barrier optimisation*, is supported by law (Equality Act 2010) and related design guidance (British Standard BS5709:2006, and Defra’s ‘Authorizing structures – gates, gaps and stiles – on rights of way’, 2010). Central principles include those of ‘reasonableness’ (of structure for intended purpose), of ‘least restriction’ (in the design of a structure), and of ‘reasonable adjustment’ (in making alterations to structures and policies to improve access). Councils are also recommended as a matter of good practice to have a published policy on their approach to meeting the Equality Act in relation to public rights of way.

Images

All the images found in this document can also be found in sequential order:

- On Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/walkcolchester/albums/72157678307529496>
- On Google Maps (see numbered red markers):
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1MjprE3-yINnGDhPQsTFzsuaetjI&usp=sharing>

Index to Obstacles identified along the Orbital

This audit is a comprehensive look at all existing manmade barriers along the Orbital route. A resolution to some however is more pressing than others, and likewise may be more or less possible. The audit therefore provides some assessment of both *priority* (urgency of need) and *feasibility* (of improving, if not removing). These assessments are non-expert, and should simply be regarded as providing a starting point for further discussion.

Clockwise from High Woods Country Park, Visitor Centre

Orbital North East

Highwoods Visitor Centre to Shaw's Farm

	Priority	Feasibility
1. The pedestrian gap alongside gate at entrance to Chanterelle car park	*	**
2. Staggered barrier at St Cyrus Road	**	**
3. Barrier/cut-through from St Mark's Drive	*	**
4. Staggered barrier on approach to St John's Road	**	**
5. Staggered barrier at St John's Road	*	**

Orbital East (A)

Shaw's Farm to Salary Brook, at Pickford Walk (Outer Loop)

6. Kissing gate on farmland at Shaw's Farm	*	**
7. (a-b) Obstacles through woods at Parsons Heath (at head of the Salary Brook valley)	*	**
8. (a-d) Obstacles through woods at Parsons Heath (continued)	*	**
9. (a-c) Access obstacles on rural/farmland footpaths east of Salary Brook valley	*	**
10. (a-c) Access obstacles on rural/farmland footpaths east of Salary Brook valley	*	**

Orbital South East

Salary Brook (Pickford Walk) to Stalin Road (Bourne Valley)

11. Staggered barrier at University of Essex zig-zag bridge	**	**
12. Potholes along Distillery Lane	**	*
13. Chicane at entrance to Bourne Valley	**	**
14. Chicane at exit from Bourne Valley	**	**

Orbital South A

Stalin Road (Bourne Valley) to The Willows Allotments (via Middlewick Ranges)

	Importance	Feasibility
15. Stile at entrance to Middlewick Ranges	**	**
16. A-frame motorcycle barrier at exit from Middlewick to Mersea Road	**	**

Orbital South B

Stalin Road (Bourne Valley) to The Willows Allotments (via Colchester Cemetery)

17. A-frame motorcycle barrier at exit from Bourne Valley to Mersea Road	*	**
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Orbital West A

Philip Morant to Cymbeline Meadows (via Lexden Park)

18. Staggered barrier on footpath adjacent to Philip Morant school	**	**
19. A-frame motorcycle barrier at woods (Endsleigh Meadow)	**	**
20. Flight of steps in woods (towards Lexden Park)	*	*
21. Steps down to Lexden Park	**	*

Orbital West B

Philip Morant to Cymbeline Meadows (via Hilly Fields)

22. Kissing gate on Remembrance Avenue (Cymbeline Meadows)	**	**
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Orbital North West

Charter Wood to High Woods Visitor Centre

23. Kissing gate at entrance to Charter Wood	**	**
24. Kissing gate at railway tunnel (Colchester North station)	*	**
25. Steps leading up from railway tunnel at Colchester North	*	*
26. Staggered gate on east (hospital) side of Northern Approach	**	**

Orbital North East

Highwoods Visitor Centre to Shaw’s Farm

1. The pedestrian gap alongside gate at entrance to Chanterelle car park



51.90521, 0.91855

This gap (to the left of the gate on exit), provides pedestrian entrance/exit to the park out of hours (after 7pm Oct-March) but is too narrow for wheelchair users and mobility scooters. It is lower priority, since the gate is open throughout main daylight hours.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
1	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Gates likely to be owned and maintained by CBC.

2. Staggered barrier at St Cyrus Road



Ref: 51.90542, 0.92785

An old, narrow, staggered barrier at the crossing to St Cyrus Road, likely to be inaccessible to larger motorised chairs and mobility scooters. An alternative, slightly longer route is possible by retracing steps and using cut-through via St Joseph Road to St Cyrus.

This barrier functions to signify the approaching road and to slow cyclists for the same reason, but could easily be replaced by an accessible alternative, with a more generous turning angle, in and out.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
2	5/9/17	ECC/GW	This is an ECC adopted & maintained path. It was deleted from Definitive Map in 1989 after area was developed.

3. Barrier / cut-through from St Mark's Drive (on right)



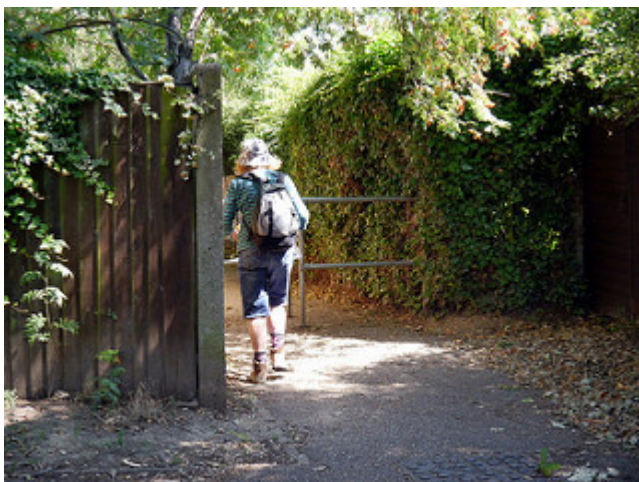
Ref: 51.90566, 0.93059



A metal staggered barrier where St Marks Drive joins the Orbital. The barrier would be accessible to most wheelchair users, but may not be to mobility scooters and all terrain chairs (needs further testing). It does not sit directly on the Orbital and is therefore not identified as higher priority. However, it does affect access on to the Orbital at this point, and is arguably unnecessary as it marks a wide off-road junction and visibility is good.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
3	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 105 Colchester. Definitive Map shows historic limitation of a Stile

4. Staggered barrier on approach to St John's Road



Ref: 51.90598, 0.93259



A staggered metal barrier as the path narrows on approach to St John's Road. Turning access into and out of the barrier is tight and prohibits access by larger wheelchairs, mobility scooters and all-terrain chairs. The only alternative is via a very long diversion, entailing a return to St Cyrus Road and a wide loop by road to join St John's Road above Bullace Close.

This is also a section of the Orbital which, were it not for this barrier and the one at St Cyrus Rd (3), otherwise has a high degree of accessibility. For both reasons, the two barriers are considered high priority.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
4	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 107 Colchester. No limitation shown on Definitive Map. A s.66 barrier? (I don't have any records of these)

5. Staggered barrier at St John's Road



Ref: 51.90622, 0.93367



An older-style but wide staggered barrier at the junction with St John's Road. Unlike those at (3) and (5), this one is unlikely to impede access to larger chairs and scooters. Suggest that it is kept subject to review but regarded as low priority at present.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
5	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 107 Colchester. Definitive Map shows historic limitation of a Gap

Orbital East (B)

6-10: Shaw's Farm to Salary Brook, at Pickford Walk (Outer Loop)

The kissing gate at (7) is the first of several obstacles that restrict access along the Orbital East (A), the most rural section of the Orbital, almost entirely across private farmland. Much can be done to improve access along this section as many of the obstacles are older, some seemingly unnecessary, or with space for alternatives. However, unless *all* obstacles on East A are resolved, full access along this section will remain impossible, so ideally it needs addressing as a whole.

In the short-term, the Orbital East (B) offers an alternative route option, hence lower priority status, although it would be useful to commence discussions with the relevant people?

6. Kissing gate on farmland at Shaw Farm



Ref: 51.90612, 0.95488

Summer (above) and winter (below) shots shown.

A metal kissing gate set into a deep headland/hedgerow. This barrier prohibits access by all wheelchair users and mobility scooters. How it is addressed will depend on the purpose of the adjacent fields (arable only?) and on whether or not a barrier is necessary at times for livestock etc. Finding a solution here, and to the kissing gate that follows on the other side of the field (8a), will be important to the eventual accessibility of the Orbital East A route, as unlike many of the other obstacles on this stretch (see 8-11), these may have a function restricting their removal/adaptation.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
6	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 17 Ardleigh. Consent was given to landowner for kissing gate in 2002

7. (a-b) Obstacles through woods at Parsons Heath



Ref: 51.90513, 0.95752



(Kissing gate viewed looking backwards)



Ref: 51.90563, 0.95819

Several obstacles through private woodland, including:

- a) above left and right: metal kissing gate at entrance to woods
- b) bottom: logs blocking footpath access (image viewed looking backwards towards kissing gate above)

ID	Date	Org	Comment
7a	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 17 Ardleigh. Consent was given to landowner for kissing gate in 2002

8. (a-d, below) Obstacles through woods at Parsons Heath (continued)



a) Ref: 51.90559, 0.95832



b)



Bridge (c) viewed looking backwards



(d)

Ref: 51.90549, 0.95878

- a-b) Two shallow wooden steps giving on to bridge beyond (narrow, though with handrails).
- c) The same bridge looking backwards, showing extended very narrow boardwalk beyond.
- d) Old metal barrier across path with narrow side access (redundant?).

Most of these will prohibit access to wheelchair users, mobility scooters and all-terrain vehicles.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
8	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 17 Ardleigh. No limitation on Definitive Map

9. (a-c) Access obstacles on rural/farmland footpaths east of Salary Brook valley



Ref: 51.9021, 0.96238



Ref: 51.89644, 0.95983



Ref: 51.8921, 0.95968

- a) Narrow footbridge at junction between fields above and approaching Bromley Road (left), with hand rail to left side.
- b) Old-style low wooden stile at entrance to woodland, just below Bromley Road (centre)
- c) Wooden footbridge, handrails to both sides, potentially accessible (width-wise) to some wheelchair users though open drop to sides may present safety issues. Small step on approach.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
9a	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 16 Ardleigh
9b	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 37 Ardleigh. No limitation on Definitive Map
9c	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 35 Ardleigh. Definitive Map shows limitation of a Pedestrian Gate next to bridge

10. (a-c) Access obstacles on rural/farmland footpaths east of Salary Brook valley.



Ref: 51.88703, 0.95695



Ref: 51.88595, 0.94538



Ref: 51.88595, 0.94538

- a) Narrow stile set into hedgerow, double-step with narrow treads. No posts.
- b) Wider stile set into open fence, adjacent to gate, with double-step. Low posts both sides.
- c) Stile set into open wooden fence with double-step. No posts.

All 3 stiles could be improved for ambulant disabled walkers. For fully inclusive access however a different solution would obviously be necessary at all points.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
10a	5/9/17	ECC/GW	CHECK ROUTE HERE. Not on a Public Path? Near, but not along, Footpath 128 Colchester?
10b	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 123 Colchester. Definitive Map shows limitation of a Stile
10c	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 123 Colchester. Definitive Map shows limitation of a Stile

Orbital South East

Salary Brook (Pickford Walk) to Stalin Road (Bourne Valley)

11. Staggered barrier at University of Essex zig-zag bridge



Ref: 51.87878, 0.93488

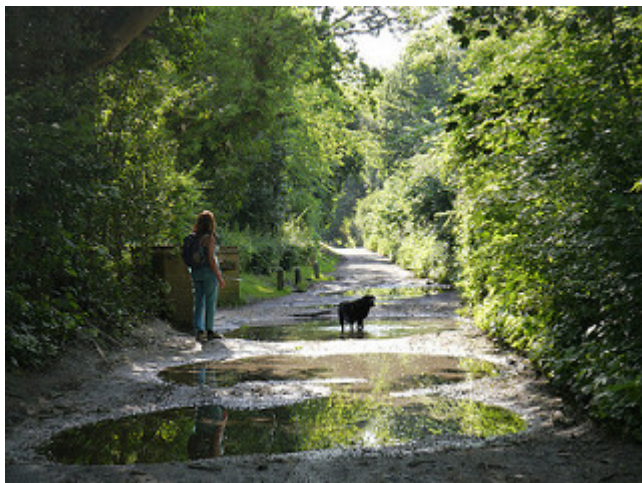
A metal staggered barrier, particularly difficult to navigate because it doubles back on itself, requiring a 180 degree turn. Although the bridge itself is explicitly designed to provide step-free access, this barrier is unnecessarily complex, prohibiting use of the bridge by users of mobility scooters and larger chairs.

The only alternative route is a detour via busy roads (Tesco roundabout), and misses the main riverside section through the Hythe.

The barrier only exists on the town side of the bridge, so any positive argument for it is somewhat lost. Perhaps it could simply be removed? For these reasons, high priority.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
11	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not recorded as ECC maintained path. Possibly University or Network Rail?

12. Potholes along Distillery Lane



Ref: 51.87664, 0.92375

This is the only obstacle included that isn't a constructed barrier as such. It is also different from the natural obstacles posed by e.g. terrain and gradients, in that it is a man-made problem that is likely being allowed to remain this way by residents, perhaps as a deterrent to easy access by non-resident vehicles.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
12	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Private Road. No public path recorded.

13. Chicane at entrance to Bourne Valley



a) Looking towards valley entrance



b) Looking back towards Old Heath Road

Ref: 51.87674, 0.91932

A wooden chicane at entrance to boardwalk along Bourne Valley. The tight 180 degree turns within this chicane prohibit use by larger and/or motorised chairs, and mobility scooters. The space available however, should allow for installation of an accessible alternative.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
13	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Barriers likely to be owned and maintained by Colchester BC.

14. Chicane at exit from Bourne Valley



Ref: 51.87673, 0.91292

A wooden chicane at exit from Bourne Valley boardwalk, at Bourne Pond. Again, a tight 180 degree turn greatly reduces accessibility to larger/motorised chairs and scooters. An accessible alternative should be feasible.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
14	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Barriers likely to be owned and maintained by Colchester BC.

Orbital South B

Stalin Road (Bourne Valley) to The Willows Allotments (via Middlewick Ranges)

15. Stile at entrance to Middlewick Ranges



Ref: 51.87284, 0.91295

The barriers listed at 15 and 16 sit on the outer route (A) and mark its entrance to and exit from this northern corner of Middlewick Ranges. At (15), an older wooden style, with single step on either side, provides the only access to the ranges at this point on Abbot's Road. The style prohibits access any access by chair and mobility scooter users. . Older/mobility-restricted walkers may also struggle with it.

Insofar as the Orbital is concerned, the barriers listed at 15 and 16 ideally need consideration alongside one another, since – for some users – access improvements to one will be ineffectual without access improvements to both. However, since both barriers offer access points to Middlewick Ranges as a destination in itself, access improvement to either in the short-term is to be welcomed.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
15	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Stile likely to be owned and maintained by MoD

16. A-frame motorcycle barrier at exit from Middlewick Ranges



a) Towards Mersea Rd from Middlewick Ranges



b) From Mersea Rd, towards the Ranges

Ref: 51.86932, 0.91111

At (16) a metal A-frame barrier functions primarily to prevent motorcycles entering the ranges. In the reverse direction, it slows path users on approach to this busy stretch of the Mersea Road (although other types of barrier would do this latter job equally well).

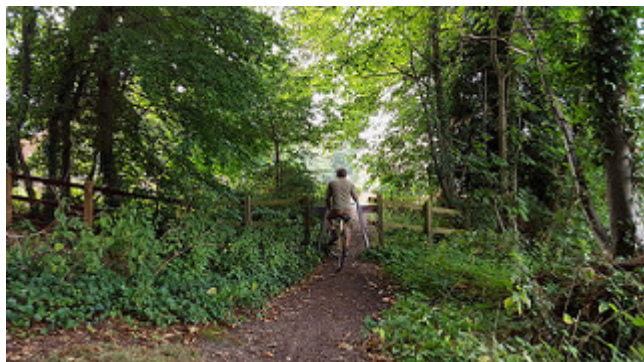
All A-frame barriers however raise unintended access issues for other users: they block access by many larger chairs (manual as well as motorised) and mobility scooters, and are hostile to visually-impaired walkers. Can alternatives be sought that achieve the intended outcomes, without inadvertently limiting legitimate access?

ID	Date	Org	Comment
16	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 160 Colchester. No limitation recorded

Orbital South A

Stalin Road (Bourne Valley) to The Willows Allotments (via Colchester Cemetery)

17. A-frame motorcycle barrier at exit from Bourne Valley onto Mersea Road



Ref: 51.87656, 0.90844

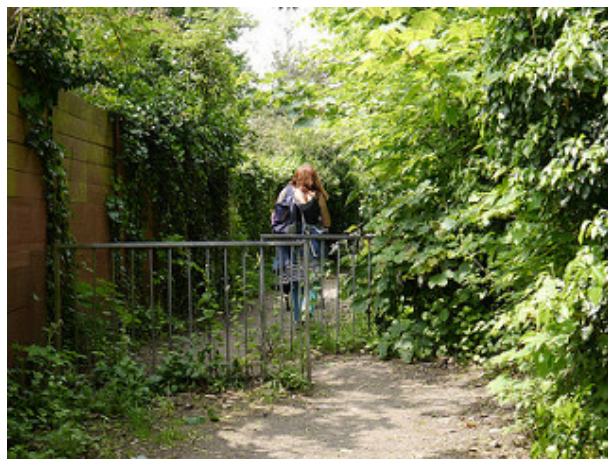
An A-frame barrier on the inner route (B) of the two southern Orbital options, at the junction of Bourne Valley woods and Mersea Road. It functions primarily to prevent motorcycles entering the woods. In the other direction, it acts as a warning of the approaching Mersea Road. The access issues inadvertently caused by the barrier are as detailed above (16).

ID	Date	Org	Comment
17	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Barriers likely to be owned and maintained by Colchester BC.

Orbital West (B)

Philip Morant to Cymbeline Meadows (via Lexden Park)

18. Staggered barrier on footpath adjacent to Philip Morant school.



Ref: 51.88147, 0.87169

A metal staggered barrier with a relatively tight turn into/out of it. Likely to constitute an obstacle for some users of larger chairs and mobility scooters.

It is questionable whether this barrier is a necessary one; it is a reasonable distance (heading anti-clockwise) from the point of connection with the road and school entrance, and therefore not effective as a means of slowing cyclists in advance. And, heading clockwise, it is the only barrier along a very long stretch of generally straight footpath, so has no apparent function in this direction. Suggest it could simply be removed?

ID	Date	Org	Comment
18	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 206 Colchester. Definitive Map shows limitation of a Gap

19. A-frame motorcycle barrier as path enters woods from Endsleigh Meadow



Ref: 51.88559, 0.8653

An A-frame barrier, designed to slow down or exclude entirely motorbikes, but effectively excluding all but the smallest wheelchairs (issues as described at 16). Could an accessible alternative be explored?

ID	Date	Org	Comment
19	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Barriers likely to be owned and maintained by Colchester BC.

20. Flight of steps in woods between Endsleigh Meadow and Lexden Park.



Ref: 51.88606, 0.86437





A flight of 8 medium-steep steps leading down (heading clockwise), constructed of wood and compacted earth. Wooden handrail on right.

- c) Flight of steps down, heading clockwise.
- d) Bottom of steps (approach from alternative path).
- e) Steps from bottom looking upwards.

There is a foot-worn earthen path around tree adjacent to steps, which avoids them, but entails a short medium-steep section and would be muddy/slippery in the wet. Could this be improved?

ID	Date	Org	Comment
20	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Steps likely to be owned and maintained by CBC.

21. (a-c) Steps down to Lexden Park



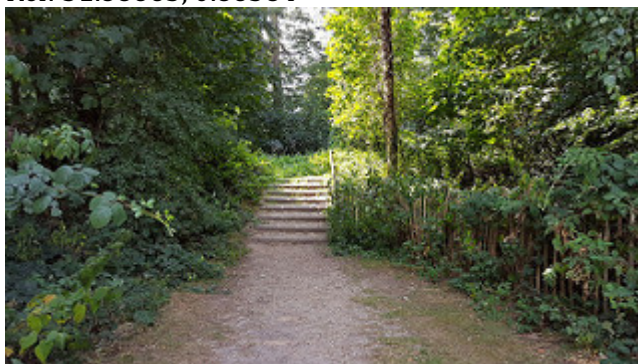
Ref: 51.88663, 0.86384



Two stepped approaches to the park at southern end. Above and left: the principal flight on route.

Left: alternative flight

There is no wheelchair accessible alternative and no immediately apparent solution to this.



Ref: 51.88677, 0.86306

Two alternative long flights of steps provide the only access down into Lexden Park at its top (southern) end, both of wood/earth construction. The flight that sits immediately on the Orbital route has a handrail on its right-hand side, heading down. It is the obstacle created by these steps that was the major incentive for an

accessible Orbital West B (although the B route has plenty of its own green interest, running as it does through Hilly Fields down to the middle section of Cymbeline Meadows).

Unfortunately, Church Lane which runs down the long side of Lexden Park is a very busy rat run with narrow pavements. There is therefore not even a good road alternative for mobility-restricted walkers at this point. Is there any scope for a ramped alternative to the park be explored?

ID	Date	Org	Comment
21	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Not a public footpath. Steps likely to be owned and maintained by CBC.

Orbital West (A)

Philip Morant to Cymbeline Meadows (via Hilly Fields)

22. Kissing gate on Remembrance Avenue (Cymbeline Meadows)



Approach from Remembrance Avenue.
Ref: 51.89572, 0.88463



Looking back (towards Remembrance Ave.)

A locked 5-bar gate at the entrance to Cymbeline Meadows, heading northwards on the inner route (B) of the Orbital West. Open access for walkers and chair users did exist until recently on the left side of the gate (see images above) but was replaced by a kissing gate in summer 2016. This new gate has not yet been audited but looks to be inaccessible to chair users.

This is an important barrier to address because it controls access to Cymbeline Meadows. And because, but for this barrier, a very significant section of Cymbeline Meadows (all the way up to Charter Wood and across the top of the Meadows to the west side and down to Spring Lane roundabout on Remembrance Avenue) could in fact be accessed by many chair and scooter users, without encounter with any man-made obstacle.

Space is somewhat limited here, but only by hedgerow and foliage etc. An accessible alternative solution should not be impossible.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
22	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 21 Colchester. First Definitive Map shows limitation of a Stile.

Orbital North West

Charter Wood to High Woods Visitor Centre

23. Kissing gate at entrance to Charter Wood



Ref: 51.90099, 0.88162

A conventional wooden kissing gate at the entrance to Charter Woods (with adjacent locked gate), effectively preventing access to woods by chair and scooter users. Although the Orbital is not fully accessible beyond this point in any event (24-25), Charter Wood is a destination in its own right, and there is therefore a strong argument for improvement, especially since there are no space restrictions. An accessible alternative, like that on the Cymbeline Meadows 'easy access' trail, could easily be installed.

This barrier is marked as lower priority only because its position adjacent to the tunnel reduces the immediate positive impact for the Orbital of any access alterations made. Note though, if the permissive right of way linking Charter Wood to the station approach on the south side of the track *could* be reinstated (see comment at 25), the removal of this barrier would have a big impact on Orbital accessibility and would be high priority.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
23	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 27 Colchester. No limitation recorded

24. Wooden kissing gate at Colchester mainline station tunnel (Charter Wood)



Ref: 51.90145, 0.8836

A wooden kissing gate at the entrance to the station tunnel. This barrier would present access issues to chair and scooter users, but since it gives way to the tunnel and steep flights of steps up on the far side of the track (25) its inaccessible design is at present of little consequence. Hence lower priority.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
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24	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 26 Colchester. Consent given to Colchester BC for kissing gate in 2008.
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25. Tunnel and steps leading up from it at Colchester North mainline station



Ref: 51.90165, 0.88364



Ref: 51.90216, 0.88377

A double flight of steps leading up from the tunnel at Colchester mainline station.

This is *the* major obstacle of the Inner Orbital insofar as it is an insurmountable one, unless the Orbital omits entirely Cymbeline Meadows - one of Colchester's most beautiful green spaces - and diverts all users via busy roads instead. The steps sit on *both* the Inner Orbital West A and B routes, which rejoin immediately in advance of the tunnel at the northernmost point of Cymbeline Meadows, at the entrance to Charter Wood.

As a result, both A and B route options are *in*accessible to wheelchair users and mobility scooters, who are necessarily diverted via the road, as described above.

Note: one possible alternative has existed in the past. There is an approach to North Station along the southern side of the railway track, through Charter Wood and then via a permissive section of footpath, running across private farmland. However, the farmer has reportedly withdrawn this permission. If it were possible to *renegotiate* this status, it would represent a very significant step in the evolution of a fully inclusive Orbital; although, being permissive, such an improvement would remain somewhat tenuous.

At present, this barrier means that chair users and many disabled walkers unable to negotiate steps, are best advised to choose sections of the Orbital that either end before, or begin after, these steps.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
25	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 26 Myland

26. Staggered gate on east (hospital) side of Northern Approach



Ref: 51.90827, 0.89697

A metal staggered barrier on Northern approach, linking with Colchester General Hospital site.

This is a relatively new barrier comma, built at the same time as the Northern Approach. It is easily navigated in a manual wheelchair comma but some larger motorized wheelchairs, mobility scooters and all-terrain vehicles may find the turn into and out of the barrier too tight to navigate. This is certainly true, for example, for the Colchester Boma all-terrain chair, a community resource for mobility-restricted walkers based at the adjacent High Woods Country Park, which is therefore prevented entirely from using the Orbital in this direction.

The barrier exists to warn users of the approach to this major road and to ensure that cyclists are obliged to slow. It clearly does have an ongoing function in these respects, but it could achieve the same with a greater depth between its parallel sides, thereby enabling access by a full range of users.

Given that this barrier sits on a major pedestrian route between residential areas and the General Hospital, the Walk-In Centre, and the country park, its potential inaccessibility to mobility scooters and all-terrain vehicles does make improvement here a priority. Further testing by different vehicle types would be useful.

ID	Date	Org	Comment
26	5/9/17	ECC/GW	Footpath 61 Myland. No limitation on Definitive Map. A s.66 barrier?

Last updated: August 2018

For more information, contact Rowena Macaulay, email: walkcolchester@rocketmail.com, or tel. 07710 474999