



## **Graven Hill, D1 Site, Bicester**

**Environmental Statement**

**Non-Technical Summary**

On behalf of **Graven Hill Purchaser Ltd**

Project Ref: 332510846 | Rev: Final | Date: June 2022

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## Document Control Sheet

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 in relation to an outline planning application for the redevelopment of the Graven Hill, D1 Site (which includes Sites D1 & EL1 of Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill – in the adopted Cherwell District Council Local Plan (July 2015).), Bicester, OX26 6HF (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) for employment use under Use Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) (hereafter referred to as ‘the Proposed Development’). The description of the Proposed Development in the outline planning application is as follows:

*“Outline (fixing ‘Access’ only) – redevelopment of Graven Hill D1 Site, including demolition of existing buildings, development of B8 ‘Storage or Distribution’ use comprising up to 104,008 sq. m (GIA), creation of open space and associated highway works, ground works, sustainable drainage systems, site infrastructure and associated works”.*

- 1.1.2 The Site is located within the Cherwell District Council (CDC) local planning authority area and forms part of the wider site allocated for development – Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill – in the adopted Local Plan (July 2015).
- 1.1.3 An ES has been prepared to present the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken for the Proposed Development. This document summarises the ES in non-technical language. The aim of this NTS is to present the technical information included in the ES in an easily understood, concise format without the reader needing to refer to the main text of the ES.

## 1.2 Terms and Definitions

- 1.2.1 For ease and to ensure consistency, the following terms have been used in this NTS (unless the context dictates otherwise):
- **‘Parameter Plans’** – plans for approval that set out the proposals for the planning application;
  - **‘Illustrative Master Plan’** – an illustrative layout of how the Proposed Development could come forward within the Parameter Plans. Please note, this is indicative only at this stage.
  - **‘CDC’** – Cherwell District Council; and
  - **‘OCC’** – Oxfordshire County Council. **2011 ES** – an Environmental Statement prepared in 2011 to support the ‘2011 planning application’.
  - **‘2011 Planning Application’** – The Planning Application submitted in 2011 by DIO (Planning Application Reference 11/01494/OUT);
  - **2014 Planning Permission**– outline planning permission for 1,900 homes, employment space and associated development at Gravel Hill, granted in August 2014. Planning Application Reference 11/01494/OUT, as amended by 15/02159/OUT, 16/01802/OUT and 19/00937/OUT;
  - **Employment Access Road (EAR)** - Planning Permission (ref: 20/02415/F) to provide a new dedicated Employment Access adjacent the northern boundary of the Site was permitted in April 2021.

## 1.3 The Environmental Impact Assessment

### EIA Regulations

- 1.3.1 This document provides a summary of an EIA undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 1.3.2 As the 2014 Planning Permission (Planning Application Reference: 11/01494/OUT) required an EIA, the Applicant has voluntarily undertaken an EIA for the Proposed Development. Therefore, no EIA screening request was prepared for the Proposed Development.
- 1.3.3 No formal EIA Scoping was undertaken in regard to the Proposed Development, however, the structure of the EIA has been informally agreed with CDC and forms the basis of the ES.
- 1.3.4 Running concurrently with the design process, the EIA has sought to identify good practice measures to mitigate likely significant adverse environmental effects that might arise as a consequence of constructing and operating the Proposed Development. The assessment process has also sought to determine the residual environmental effects that will remain after mitigation has been incorporated.

### EIA Scoping

- 1.3.5 As per the 2011 ES, given that the Site is still being proposed for the construction of employment floorspace, no new or different likely significant effects are anticipated with respect to Risk of Major Accidents and Disasters or Waste. These topics are therefore scoped out of this ES.
- 1.3.6 The scope of technical topics to be included in the ES is listed below and has been informally agreed with CDC, however no formal Scoping Opinion was requested.
  - Ecology and Nature Conservation
  - Historic Environment
  - Landscape and Visual Effects
  - Hydrology and Flood Risk
  - Hydrogeology, Geology and Ground Conditions
  - Traffic and Transport
  - Noise and Vibration
  - Climate Change
  - Air Quality
  - Socio-economics

### **EIA Project Team**

- 1.3.7 A team of 'competent experts' as defined under the EIA Regulation has been appointed to prepare the ES.

### **Structure of the Environmental Statement**

- 1.3.8 The ES comprises the following volumes:

- **Volume 1:** Main Report;
- **Volume 2:** Appendices; and
- **Non-Technical Summary** (this document).

### **Other Principal Planning Documents**

- 1.3.9 The other principal documents submitted with the planning application are:

- Supporting Town Planning Statement (H Planning Ltd)
- Design and Access Statement (Atelier Gooch Ltd)
- Statement of Community Involvement (H Planning Ltd)
- Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) (RPS)
- Area Schedule and Plans including Site Location Plan, Existing Site Plans, Demolition and Enabling Plans and Proposed Parameter Site Plans (Atelier Gooch Ltd)
- Indicative Masterplan for Illustration Purposes Only (Atelier Gooch Ltd)
- Detailed Access Plans to fix 'Access' (Alan Baxter Associates)
- Buildings Demolition Report (Resolute Property Consultancy)
- Economic Impact Statement (Quod)
- Energy and Sustainability Statement (BWB Consulting)
- BREEAM Pre-Assessment (BWB Consulting)
- Transport Assessment (Alan Baxter Associates)
- Interim Travel Plan (Alan Baxter Associates)
- Rapid Health Impact Assessment (Stantec)
- Review of Geotechnical Investigation Report (Alan Baxter Associates)
- Lighting Impact Assessment (BWB Consulting)
- Ecological Assessment (RPS)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (RPS)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Watermans)

## 2 Site and Surrounding Area

### 2.1 The Site & Surroundings

- 2.1.1 The Site is located approximately 2.8 km south-east of Bicester Town Centre. The village of Ambrosden is approximately 720 m east, Merton is located approximately 2 km south and Wedlebury is located approximately 2.6 km south-west.
- 2.1.2 An unnamed road bounds the northern edge of the Site, with St Davids Barracks beyond and Graven Hill Wood beyond that, approximately 120 m north. The southern, eastern and western boundaries comprise adjoining agricultural fields, with a freight railway line (Bicester Military Railway) denoting the edge of the Site to the south. Beyond the railway line to the south is Bicester Solar Farm.
- 2.1.3 Current direct access to the Site is via the A41/A4421/B4100 roundabout to Anniversary Avenue / Pioneer Road to the north of the Site. Junction 9 of the M40, which links London, Oxford and Birmingham, is located a short distance to the southwest.
- 2.1.4 The Site comprises 75 acres (30.35 Ha) of land, and is vacant brownfield site comprising warehouses, areas of hardstanding used for parking and storage and open spaces. The site was previously used as part of the Ministry of Justice Logistics, Commodities and Services (LCS) logistics hub, formerly known as Defence Storage and Distribution Agency (DSDA), logistics hub. This function dates back to September 1942 when a depot was constructed to provide logistical support for operations in Europe during World War II.
- 2.1.5 There are currently five large vacant warehouses (Unit D1, Unit D2, Unit D4, Unit D7, Unit D10 & D20, the latter being the sub-station) at the Site, totalling approximately 41,831 m<sup>2</sup>. This figure excludes the buildings removed as part of the EAR which is to be completed later this year (e.g., Units D05, D03 & D12).
- 2.1.6 The Site includes areas of vegetation both within and along its boundaries including natural scrub land, open grass areas that are regularly managed and cut back and semi-natural woodland edges to the east, south and north-west. These woodlands consist of predominantly broad leaf species such as Oak, Common Beech and Alder with smaller areas of Pine.
- 2.1.7 The scrub, trees and woodland within and on the boundary of the Site have value for fauna including breeding birds, roosting bats and badger. Survey work on site in 2020 and 2021 noted the presence of swallows' nest (and mature chicks), bats and two badger setts were present on the south-western boundary.
- 2.1.8 The Site lies on a gentle slope south to north, towards Graven Hill (115m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), rising from 61.5m AOD along the southern boundary to 71m AOD at its highest point on the northern boundary. The slope across the Site east to west is gentle and generally appears flat. There are some local variations, mostly forming the banks around the railway tracks to the south, which will be removed and levelled in preparation for the Proposed Development.
- 2.1.9 A Site Location Plan is shown in **Appendix 1**.



## 3 The Proposed Development

### 3.1 Development Description

3.1.1 The description of the Proposed Development is:

*“Outline (fixing ‘Access’ only) – redevelopment of Graven Hill D1 Site, including demolition of existing buildings, development of B8 ‘Storage or Distribution’ use comprising up to 104,008 sq. m (GIA), creation of open space and associated highway works, ground works, sustainable drainage systems, site infrastructure and associated works”.*

3.1.2 At this stage, the Outline Planning Permission seeks to fix ‘Access’ only, leaving matters of ‘Scale’, ‘Layout’, ‘Appearance’, and ‘Landscape’, to the ‘Reserved Matters’ Stage. The Parameter Plans and Detailed Access Drawings set out the proposals for approval and include a description of the proposed height, land use quantum and structural landscaping of the Proposed Development that will be accommodated within the Site.

3.1.3 The Proposed Development seeks to demolish existing buildings which comprise 42,074 sqm of Class B8 use. The Proposed Development will deliver an approximately 15% increase in commercial space when compared with the 2014 Planning Permission.

3.1.4 The Proposed Layout Parameter Plan shows an increase in building heights from the 2014 Planning Permission. Buildings are proposed to have a maximum ridge height of 20 m, as opposed to a maximum of 15 m ridge height outlined in the 2011 planning application.

#### Access and Parking

3.1.5 As shown on the detailed access drawings (**Appendix 2**), the proposed vehicular access will be from four bell mouth entrances off the EAR on the northern boundary of the Site which is currently under construction and is due to be completed in 2022.

3.1.6 Parking will also be provided for office and warehouse employees as part of the Proposed Development, with an indicative 902 spaces proposed in total.

#### Green Space

3.1.7 Landscape is an integral part of the Proposed Development, with 47% of the Site proposed to comprise Green Infrastructure.

3.1.8 The Proposed Layout Parameter Plan (**Appendix 2**) shows a network of green fingers / wildlife corridors to provide links through the Proposed Development to Graven Hill Wood. These green fingers / wildlife corridors will comprise Sustainable Drainage (SuDs), informal recreation, pathways for pedestrians and cyclists and habitat corridors; and also provide vistas through the Site which will accentuate the significant aesthetic value.

3.1.9 A Bat Barn (32 sqm GIA) is proposed to be constructed in the south-east corner of the Site prior to the demolition of the existing units to provide primary mitigation for biodiversity.

### 3.2 Local Policy Allocation and Project History

3.2.1 The Site is allocated in the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted 2015) under Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill. In regard to employment, it states that use classes may include B1, B2 and B8 uses.

- 3.2.2 The Site also forms part of the wider Graven Hill development site, of which development was Granted permission in August 2014 (ref: 11/01494/OUT). The wider site was granted permission for the provision of 1,900 homes; retail and community facilities, and employment floorspace. The majority of this employment floorspace is provided at the D1 Site.
- 3.2.3 The key principle that has driven the update to the development proposals ('B8' land use only) is recent structural changes in the market which means that there is significant demand for high quality Use Class B8 units in locations that have good road transport links, such as the proposed Site.
- 3.2.4 The Proposed Development seeks to provide a greater height for the already approved units; maximum 20m ridge height) instead of approximately 15 metres which was approved in the 2014 Planning Permission).

### 3.3 Consideration of Alternatives

#### No Development

- 3.3.1 The Site comprises part of the wider allocated brownfield site under Policy Bicester 2: Graven Hill within the Cherwell Local Plan. Therefore, the principle of development at the Site is being established through planning policy. As such, no development is not a reasonable alternative that has been considered as it does not accord with policy and would not help to meet the employment needs of the area.

#### Alternative Sites

- 3.3.2 The nature of the Proposed Development is such that the objective is to redevelop the Site as part of the wider Graven Hill allocation and, as a result, no alternative sites have been considered by the Applicant

#### Alternative Forms of Development

- 3.3.3 A potential alternative was to not make any changes to the 2014 Planning Permission and adhere to the consented development, however, changes in this market mean that there is significant demand for high quality B8 units in locations meaning that the demand will be addressed more satisfactorily by the Proposed Development.
- 3.3.4 The Proposed Development has evolved over the past six to nine months, primarily in response to detailed pre-application consultation with CDC and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), as well as infrastructure providers and other stakeholder consultation. The different versions of the Proposed Development are detailed in the ES. The proposed parameters for development on the Site reflect the most suitable form of development to respond to a constraints and opportunities exercise that was completed for the Site.

### 3.4 Construction and Demolition

- 3.4.1 As part of the construction of the Proposed Development, the five large vacant warehouses on the Site will be demolished. These existing buildings total approximately 41,831m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.4.2 It is anticipated that key construction activities are likely to include:
- Demolition of the existing buildings;
  - Vegetation clearance, earthworks and soil preparation to prepare the Site for construction activities;

- Site remediation with respect to PAHs and asbestos, which could include source removal or capping and inclusion of basic ground gas protection measures;
- Construction of infrastructure including internal access routes, highway improvements, access works and drainage;
- Construction of building foundations, structure, cladding and glazing and internal walls and partitions;
- Installation of fixtures, fitting and building services; and
- Formation of open space, with associated soft landscaping.

### Phasing and Programme of Works

3.4.3 The anticipated construction timescales are as follows:

- Demolition start date: October 2022;
- Construction start date: Quarter 1 2023 (Jan – April); and
- Completion date: 2024.

3.4.4 The construction works will be limited to appropriate working hours to be agreed with CDC with typical working hours are anticipated to be as follows (unless otherwise agreed with CDC):

- Monday – Friday - 07:30 – 18:00; Saturday - 08:00 – 12:30
- Sunday – No noise work; Bank Holidays - Site Closed

### Demolition, Construction and Site Management

3.4.5 All of the construction operations carry with them a range of issues to be dealt with in their design, preparation and execution. Best practice in construction management will be required to minimise the environmental effects and disruption that could be caused by the construction project.

3.4.6 Construction will be managed through the implementation of a CEMP. An Outline CEMP has been submitted alongside this ES (RPS, 2022) and will form the basis of the more detailed CEMP, plans and method statements, to be prepared during the pre-construction period once a Principal Contractor is appointed. The Outline CEMP identifies a range of measures, in relation to aspects such as noise and vibration, dust and air pollution, ecology, and water resources, which will be utilised during the construction of the Proposed Development.

3.4.7 The Principal Contractor will be responsible for preparing and implementing the detailed CEMP, which will be agreed with the CDC in advance of the commencement of demolition and construction. The CEMP will be a live document throughout the construction period and will be updated to respond to changes to legislation, standards, available techniques, etc. as well as any changes to construction techniques.

3.4.8 The implementation of the CEMP will necessitate the keeping of environmental records (environmental training, waste documentation, complaints register, monitoring records, etc.). Such records will be kept in a dedicated file by the Principal Contractor and will be available for inspection by the CDC upon request.

## 4 Assessment Methods

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section describes the process by which the EIA has been carried out and summaries the findings.

### 4.2 EIA Process

- 4.2.1 The EIA Regulations set out the procedures for undertaking an EIA and the information which is required in an ES and such procedure has been followed in this assessment.
- 4.2.2 No formal screening exercise was undertaken for the Proposed Development and the Applicant agreed to voluntarily submit an EIS given the potential for significant environmental effects.
- 4.2.3 No formal EIA Scoping was undertaken in regard to the Proposed Development; however, the structure of the EIA has been informally agreed with CDC and forms the basis of the ES.
- 4.2.4 A comprehensive programme of consultations has been undertaken with statutory and non-statutory organisations as well as a community engagement event with the local community. Such consultations have been undertaken to inform the emerging design and EIA.

### 4.3 Assessment Methodology

- 4.3.1 This section provides a summary of the assessment methodology. The detailed methodology is provided in Chapter 6 of the ES.

#### Establishing Baseline Conditions

- 4.3.2 The EIA has assessed the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development against baseline conditions which have been established based on technical surveys and assessments. The surveys undertaken, and their findings are reported in each of the technical chapters within the ES.
- 4.3.3 The EIA has assessed the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development against environmental baseline conditions in the same year (i.e. providing an assessment of 'do something' and 'do nothing' scenarios). Each chapter has considered as appropriate the likely evolution of current baseline conditions should the development not proceed and has therefore used future baseline conditions within the assessment of effects.

#### Assessing Effects

- 4.3.4 The EIA has assessed the likely significant effects demolition, construction and operation effects of the Proposed Development against baseline conditions which have been established through technical surveys and assessments.
- 4.3.5 Given the nature of the Proposed Development, there is the potential for significant environmental effects to result during both the demolition and construction, and operation of the development. The EIA has therefore considered both demolition and construction and operational effects.
- 4.3.6 Specific significance criteria have been prepared as appropriate for each specialist topic for adverse and beneficial effects as required, based on the generic criteria set out in **Table 4.1** below.

Table 4.1: Generic Significance Criteria

	Significance Level	Criteria
	Major	These effects are likely to be important considerations at a parish or island scale and may become key factors in the decision-making process.
	Moderate	These effects, while important at a local scale, are not likely to be key decision-making issues. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of such issues may lead to an increase in the overall effects on a particular area or on a particular resource.
Not significant	Minor	These effects may be raised as local issues but are unlikely to be of importance in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, they are of relevance in enhancing the subsequent design of the project and consideration of mitigation or compensation measures.
	Negligible / No Effect	Either no effect or effect which is beneath the level of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error. Such effects should not be considered by the decision-maker.

4.3.7 For the purposes of undertaking the assessment in accordance with the EIA Regulations, effects determined to be moderate or greater are considered significant in EIA terms. Where significant effects have been identified, appropriate mitigation and monitoring requirements have been proposed to allow effects to be reduced to an acceptable level.

4.3.8 The EIA Regulations require the assessment to consider the environmental effects of a project in the context of other “*existing and approved developments*” (referred to as ‘committed development’) in order to identify likely significant cumulative effects. A review of planning applications was undertaken to identify any major committed developments within 2.5 km of the Site which include:

- Demolition of D1 Site – 22/00835/F
- Graven Hill Site C, D and E including subsequent reserved matters applications and amendments, excluding the employment element which forms the basis of the Site – 11/01494/OUT, 15/02159/OUT, 16/01802/OUT, 19/00937/OUT
- New dedicated Employment Access Road (EAR) – 20/02415/F
- Wretchwick Way, Bicester – 16/01268/OUT
- Symmetry Park, Morrell Way, Bicester, Units A1, A2 and B – 16/00861/HYBRID
- Symmetry Park, Morrell Way, Bicester, Unit C – 19/00388/F

## 4.4 Ecology

### Introduction

4.4.1 Information on ecology receptors within the Proposed Development area were collected through a desktop review of existing datasets and studies, including site-specific surveys which were undertaken as part of the original submission for the Proposed Development and a previously consented development which sits adjacent to the Proposed Development.

### Assessment of Effects

4.4.2 One non-statutory site, designated under international legislation for its nature conservation interest, was recorded within 10 km of the Proposed Development: Graven Hill LWS, which is located 380 m to the north west of the Site and is designated as ancient woodland. Impacts as

a result of disturbance and pollution events were considered in relation to the site. The assessment concluded the magnitude of the impact as negligible and the sensitivity of the receptor as medium. The effect will therefore be **Negligible to Minor Adverse (Not Significant)**.

- 4.4.3 The habitats on site comprised buildings, hardstanding and occasionally managed neutral semi-improved grassland. Large areas of neutral semi-improved grassland, mature scattered trees, scrub, broadleaved woodland and small waterbodies, which are of higher ecological value, would be lost during the construction phase, however are not considered to have an ecological value beyond the Site level (i.e. negligible value). Therefore, the overall effect of the construction phase of the Project on the habitats present when taking in consideration the proposed mitigation is deemed to be a **Minor Adverse (Not Significant)** effect.
- 4.4.4 GCN were recorded in a pond located within 100 m of the Site in 2020 (RPS, 2020) and previously recorded in a pond within the Site boundary. Since these surveys were undertaken, two ponds have been cleared and drained under a Natural England EPS GCN mitigation licence held for the wider Graven Hill development and numerous receptor sites have been created over 700 m to the north of the Site boundary. In the absence of mitigation, the loss of habitat as a result of the Proposed Development is unlikely to significantly affect GCN. Due to the absence of this species from the Site and the distance to the closest receptor site for the wider Graven Hill development, the sensitivity of the receptor is considered to be medium, therefore this would lead to a permanent **Minor Adverse (Not Significant)** effect.
- 4.4.5 During reptile surveys undertaken in 2018 (Ecology Solutions, 2019) and 2019 (Waterman Group, 2020), low populations of common lizard and slow worm were recorded in the north easterly area of the Site and within the ruderal vegetation along the banks of the railway. Considering the primary mitigation proposed for the Site, this would lead to a low magnitude of impact for reptiles. The sensitivity of the receptor is considered to be low, therefore this would lead to a **Minor Adverse (Not Significant)** effect.
- 4.4.6 Based on the surveys undertaken in 2019, species likely to be affected by demolition and construction activities could include linnet, starling and song thrush, which are Red-listed species and swallow, whitethroat and willow warbler which are Amber-listed species under the Birds of Conservation Concern (previously cited under Eaton *et al.*, 2009). Barn owl have been frequently recorded foraging over the Site since the original surveys were undertaken in 2019. Taking the primary mitigation into account, this would lead to a medium magnitude of impact for breeding birds. The sensitivity of the receptor is considered to be low to medium, therefore this would lead to a **Minor to Moderate adverse (Not Significant)** effect.
- 4.4.7 The emergence / re-entry surveys undertaken between September 2020 and August 2021 identified seven buildings with confirmed bat roosts. Based on Wray *et al.* (2010) and in the absence of current survey data, the Site is likely to be of District level value to more common species, including pipistrelles, brown long-eared bats, *Myotis* species, *Nyctalus* species and Leisler's bats. Whereas the Site is likely to be of County importance for rarer bats such as barbastelle. The CEMP includes measures to minimise the effects of construction phase lighting and noise, including ensuring that light spill on retained habitats (specifically woodland) and wildlife corridors adjacent to the Site are minimised. Taking this into account, the loss of roosts and foraging / commuting habitat would be of a high magnitude. The sensitivity of the receptor is considered to be low to medium, therefore this would lead to a **Moderate to Major adverse effect (Significant)**.
- 4.4.8 Following the successful design and implementation of mitigation measures, it is anticipated that the operational effects on IEFs will be **Negligible to Minor** and not significant in EIA terms.
- 4.4.9 An assessment of cumulative impacts on ecology and nature conservation from the Project together with other developments within approximately 2.5 km were assessed, which were predicted to be non-significant in EIA terms, following successful implementation of mitigation.



- 4.4.10 In comparison to the 2014 Planning Permission, an indicative BNG assessment of the 2014 Planning Permission for the Site produced a score of -61.32%, however this assumed a 'worst-case' scenario in the absence of detailed landscaping plans. This is in comparison to a score of -75.57% for the Proposed Development (drawing reference: 410\_S-51-P2), largely as a result of the loss of grassland across the Site. There are no perceivable differences in impacts to protected and notable species.

## 4.5 Historic Environment

### Introduction

- 4.5.1 No designated heritage assets are located within the Site. Three non-designated heritage assets are recorded within the Site. These comprise of features associated with the former Central Ordnance Depot, which include demolished P.O.W. Camp 657, storage hanger D2 and its six adjacent air raid shelters, and railway tracks part of the Bicester Military Railway.
- 4.5.2 Within the study area, designated and non-designated heritage assets are recorded. Designated heritage assets include three Scheduled Monuments and 13 Listed Buildings (one Grade II\*, 12 Grade II). The closest Listed Buildings in proximity to the Site include the two Grade II Listed Buildings of Wretchwick Farmhouse and its associated barn, located c. 340m and c. 310m, respectively, northeast of the Site. Non-designated heritage assets comprise of 34 monuments, element records and archaeological findspots.
- 4.5.3 Previous archaeological investigations within the Site include four events (archaeological building recording, two geophysical surveys and a watching brief). A total of 32 events are recorded within the study area, with 13 events recorded within the area encompassed by Graven Hill alone.
- 4.5.4 The potential for archaeological remains within the Site is limited to open areas between remaining extant structures and the footprints of demolished structures associated with the former MoD base. These areas have been assigned a medium potential for unknown archaeological remains, most likely to date to the Iron Age – Roman periods onwards. Encountered remains, if present, would likely be of up to medium value.

### Assessment of Effects

- 4.5.5 Identified impacts to designated built heritage assets are limited to Wretchwick Farmhouse, and its associated barn. A negligible setting impacts and slight significance of effect for both heritage assets has been identified. Impacts to non-designated built heritage impacts and archaeological remains within the Site would be major, with a neutral-moderate significance of effect.
- 4.5.6 It is recommended that a programme of archaeological investigation (e.g. evaluation trial trenching) is completed to confirm the presence, absence, date, value, extent and condition of any surviving archaeological remains within identified areas of remaining archaeological potential within the Site. The nature of such works would be agreed and confirmed with OCCAS. This will inform any mitigation works which may be required.
- 4.5.7 There is no material change in the conclusions compared to the 2014 Planning Permission.

## 4.6 Landscape and Visual

### Introduction

- 4.6.1 The assessment methodology used to determine the significance of the effects on landscape and visual resources and receptors is based primarily on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition*.

- 4.6.2 The study area for the LVIA is 10 km from the outer edges of the Site. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was generated for the Proposed Development on the Site and then publicly accessible viewpoint locations were chosen to represent a geographically diverse range of views. Baseline data collection included a desktop review of published character data and fieldwork, which included taking photographs from representative viewpoint as well as site photographs.

### **Assessment of Effects**

- 4.6.3 Landscape Character - During the demolition and construction phase, no potential significant effects would be experienced by the national, county or district landscape character areas or types. Most site-specific landscape features, elements and characteristics would not be significantly affected. However, it is judged that there would be a temporary significant effect on the individual trees within the site, as many would be removed to make way for the development. During the operation and maintenance phase the effects on landscape character would reduce over time, as the landscape in which the Proposed Development will be set, matures.
- 4.6.4 Visual Receptors - The effects experienced by High and Medium sensitivity visual receptors (people) would, not, for the majority, be significant. However, due to proximity those people engaged in outdoor sport at the pitches immediately to the north of the Site would experience a significant effect on their views, both during the demolition and construction phase and the operation and maintenance phase.
- 4.6.5 Cumulative Impacts - Cherwell District Council selected the other projects that were to be considered in the Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA). Having reviewed the details of these projects, it is judged that there is no potential for the Proposed Development in combination with any, or all, of the cumulative projects, to have a significant effect on either the landscape character, or available views.
- 4.6.6 Comparison to 2014 Planning Permission - Comparing the Proposed Development with the 2014 Planning Permission, the increase in height has resulted in additional areas from which the development might be seen. However, the increase in the areas of land affected, would not significantly increase the effects on those landscape character areas and types. For most visual receptors (people) the change in views will have no significant effects. However, some High and Medium sensitivity visual receptors, e.g. people using the sports pitches immediately to the north of the Site would experience a large change in their views and a significant effect that would reduce over time, but not to such as the 2014 Planning Permission.

## **4.7 Hydrology and Flood Risk**

### **Introduction**

- 4.7.1 The assessment of hydrology and flood risk focuses on the potential for increased flooding and waterbody disturbance as a consequence of the Proposed Development. The baseline hydrology and flood risk was characterised by a desk-top study of published sources.
- 4.7.2 According to the EA Flood Map for Planning, the Proposed Development is located entirely in Flood Zone 1, which is classified as being at low risk of fluvial flooding. The two peripheral ordinary watercourses have been modelled by the RPS and the modelling results predict that the floodplain will not extend to the boundaries of the Site.
- 4.7.3 The EA's updated Flood Map for Surface Water, which is available online, indicates that a large area in the south-east of the Site and linear areas, associated with existing rail tracks at high risk of surface water flooding.



- 4.7.4 Mitigation measures have been proposed in the Outline CEMP during demolition and construction. A Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Strategy has been prepared to integrate mitigation during operation so there is no increase in flood risk within and outside the site boundaries as a result of the Proposed Development. The quality of surface water runoff would be ensured through the discharge of runoff via permeable paving, and open basins, which would offer natural removal of limited contaminants / sediments.

#### **Assessment of Effects**

- 4.7.5 The hydrology and flood risk impact assessment has determined that the Proposed Development will have no significant effects on hydrology and flood risk following the implementation of appropriate and agreed upon mitigation measures.
- 4.7.6 There is no change when compared to the 2014 Planning Permission.

### **4.8 Hydrogeology, Geology and Ground Conditions**

#### **Introduction**

- 4.8.1 The methodology for assessment utilises the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) approach in likely significant effects.
- 4.8.2 The baseline conditions for the Project Development are primarily informed by the collection and review of desk-based information which enabled the development of a Conceptual Site Model (CSM).
- 4.8.3 The Site is indicated to be underlain by bedrock comprising mudstones of the Peterborough member which in turn is underlain by sandstone and siltstone of the Kellaway Sand Member. Superficial geology is indicated to be absent from much of the Site with Alluvium (clay, silt sand and gravel) indicated to be present close to the south-western boundary.
- 4.8.4 The Peterborough Member is classified as an unproductive stratum and the Alluvium and Kellaway Sands Member classified as Secondary A aquifers. The nearest surface water feature is reported to be the Langford Brook situated 1.5 km north of the Site.
- 4.8.5 A review of historical maps shows that the Site to have been developed as a military depot for the storage of vehicles and equipment and following the end of the Second World War the storage of military hardware and the processing of ammunition containers. A recent ground investigation undertaken at the Site encountered Made Ground. This groundwater encountered is considered to represent discontinuous perched groundwater beneath the Site with the groundwater table likely to lie at depth within the Kellaway Sands.
- 4.8.6 Ground gas monitoring encountered elevated concentrations of carbon dioxide with no measurable gas flows. A limited scope of remediation of the Site has been identified with respect of PAHs and asbestos which could include source removal or capping and inclusion of basic ground gas protection measures.

#### **Assessment of Effects**

- 4.8.7 The assessment has considered potential impacts on the underlying aquifers, surface watercourses, and human health (construction workers, future site users and adjacent site users). With mitigation measure in place during construction and operation of the Proposed Development, the impacts are classed as **Negligible**. The mitigation measures include Site remediation as described above, the scope and detail of which will be provided in the Remediation Strategy, which will be agreed with CDC prior to the commencement of construction, the preparation and implementation of a detailed Construction and

Environmental Management Plan and, during operation the installation of an on-site drainage system and use of best practice pollution control measures.

- 4.8.8 Taking into account the aforementioned mitigation measures significant effects were not predicted for either the construction or operational phases of the Proposed Development. Residual effects associated with remediation of the Site may be considered beneficial.

## 4.9 Traffic and Transport

### Introduction

- 4.9.1 This chapter sets out the assessment methodology for determining the traffic and transport impact from the Proposed Development.
- 4.9.2 The assessment methodology follows IEMA guidance (IEMA, 1993) and the following issues are scoped into the assessment: Severance, Driver Delay, Pedestrian, Delay, Pedestrian Amenity, Fear and Intimidation and Accidents and Safety.
- 4.9.3 In order to derive the consented trips, documents relating to the 2014 Planning Permission were reviewed. In order to derive the proposed trips, new trip generation was sourced from the TRICS database for storage and distribution (B8) land usage. Additionally, bypass flows on the Employment Access Road (EAR), were sourced by OCC.

### Assessment of Effects

- 4.9.4 As there is an extant permission (the 2014 Planning Permission), the traffic analysis compares the consented development to the proposed. This finds that traffic levels fall when compared to that which is consented and already accounted for on the highway network. The significance of all effects assessed are either negligible or beneficial, and the magnitude of impacts are either negligible or beneficial.
- 4.9.5 In terms of severance, this has been assessed during the operational stage, and is considered negligible or to have no effect. In terms of driver delay, during the construction stage this is considered negligible or to have no effect, and during the operational stage with lesser traffic volumes is considered to be beneficial.
- 4.9.6 In terms of pedestrian delay, this has been assessed during the operational stage, and is considered negligible or beneficial. In terms of pedestrian amenity, this has been assessed during the operational stage, and is considered negligible or have a small benefit. In terms of fear and intimidation, during both the construction and operational stages this is considered negligible or to have no effect. In terms of accidents and safety, during both the construction and operational stages this is considered negligible or to have no effect.
- 4.9.7 In terms of traffic and transport considerations, the Proposed Development improves the environmental effects when compared to the 2014 Planning Permission.

## 4.10 Noise and Vibration

### Introduction

- 4.10.1 The assessment of the noise and vibration effects during the demolition, construction and operational phase has been established in accordance with published guidelines and best practice. To inform the assessment, baseline conditions were established through a survey undertaken in March 2022.
- 4.10.2 During the demolition and construction phase primary mitigation measures comprising an Outline CEMP and secondary mitigation comprising a construction traffic management plan

(CTMP) secured through planning condition, would be implemented to reduce noise and vibration during this phase of the Proposed Development.

### **Assessment of Effects**

- 4.10.3 With primary and secondary mitigation the predicted levels of noise and vibration during construction would be reduced to acceptable levels as detailed in British Standards Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites for Noise and Vibration.
- 4.10.4 Noise limits for fixed external plant and building services associated with the Proposed Development have been recommended to safeguard existing and future residential amenity. Compliance with these limits, which are in accordance with CDCs requirements, ensures negligible effect and therefore insignificant.
- 4.10.5 Break-out noise from the Units will be controlled through the sound insulation provided by the Unit's walls, roof and doors, thereby safeguarding residential amenity.
- 4.10.6 Noise from external on-site operations, such as HGV movements, loading/unloading operations will be reduced primarily through screening afforded by strategic layout of the Proposed Development, thereby using the Units to screen external operations, but also through provision of localised screening where required. Further reduction in external operational noise may also be achieved through selection of 'quiet' plant and use of broad-band reverse alarms rather than tonal. This would be subject to further assessment at reserved matters stage to ensure the necessary controls are in place to safeguard residential amenity.
- 4.10.7 Changes in road traffic noise as a result of the Proposed Development are less than 1dB for all links, except for the EAR, and therefore of negligible effect and insignificant. The EAR is subject of a separate application and is already permitted although intrinsically linked to the Proposed Development. The increase in road traffic noise on the EAR with the Proposed Development when compared to the 2014 Planning Permission is +1.2dB, which is small in magnitude and of minor adverse impact.
- 4.10.8 With the implementation of mitigation measures, both inherent and further mitigation, the potential impact from the Proposed Development, should be reduce so that it is compatible with the surrounding land-uses.

## **4.11 Climate Change**

### **Introduction**

- 4.11.1 An assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Development on climate change and the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to climate change (climate change resilience) has been undertaken.
- 4.11.2 Historic climate data has been obtained from the Met Office website and UK Climate Projections published in 2018 (UKCP18) was used for the baseline assessment for the impact of the project on climate change.
- 4.11.3 The Applicant has made a commitment that the Proposed Development will be 'Net Zero Carbon in Construction'.
- 4.11.4 Management of construction effects will form part of a comprehensive and auditable Detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The building will also be assessed under BREEAM and a minimum 'Excellent' rating targeted.

- 4.11.5 The Interim Travel Plan (ABA, 2022) contains details of the measures incorporated to reduce the impact of transport associated with the development. This will assist in reducing carbon emissions associated with operational transport.
- 4.11.6 To mitigate for the anticipated operational energy related emissions, the Proposed Development will use the 'energy hierarchy' to reduce carbon emissions, as detailed in the Energy and Sustainability Statement (BWB, 2022).

#### Assessment of Effects

- 4.11.7 Impact on Climate Change - In terms of construction impacts, the proposed development will result in carbon emissions during construction. However, with the additional mitigation, the development will be 'Net Zero Carbon in Construction' using the methodology outlined in the UKGBC's net zero framework. Carbon emissions will be reduced as much as feasibly possible. Following this, if there are any construction related residual carbon emissions, these will be offset through the funding of verified and accredited offset schemes, in line with principals set out in UKGBC's net zero framework. Therefore, the residual construction impact is considered to be negligible, not significant.
- 4.11.8 Resilience to Climate Change - The proposed development is likely to be at increased risk of climate change related hazards. Given the mitigation measures identified this is considered to have adverse impacts of minor to moderate significance.

### 4.12 Air Quality

#### Introduction

- 4.12.1 The main likely effects on local air quality during demolition and construction relate to nuisance dust and exhaust emissions from construction vehicles and plant.
- 4.12.2 A range of measures to minimise or prevent dust and reduce exhaust emissions generated from construction activities are set out in the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and will implemented throughout the demolition and construction phase. Therefore, it is considered effects due to dust emissions would be **Negligible (Not Significant)**.

#### Assessment of Effects

- 4.12.3 Construction traffic movements would be agreed with CDC and consideration given to the avoidance, or limited use of roads during peak hours. Considering these measures, the effect of construction vehicles on local air quality would be **Negligible (Not Significant)**.
- 4.12.4 A detailed modelling exercise has been undertaken to assess likely effects on local air quality associated with changes to road traffic from the Development. The modelling indicates levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulates would not exceed nationally accepted limits at any of the nearby residential properties or within the Development in 2024. It is concluded that the effect of the Development on levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulates would be **Negligible (Not Significant)**.

### 4.13 Socioeconomics

#### Introduction

- 4.13.1 An assessment has been made of the socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development during the demolition / construction and operational phases. Socio-economic baseline conditions were identified from a range of current data sources and an impact assessment was undertaken to outline the potential effects of the development.

### Assessment of Effects

- 4.13.2 The demolition and construction phase of development is anticipated to result in negligible effects. Construction employment is estimated to support 450 construction roles over the duration of the anticipated 22-month demolition and construction period. the effect in the case of the Proposed Development would be direct, temporary (medium-term), and Negligible (not significant) at Regional level.
- 4.13.3 The operational phase of the Proposed Development is expected to have beneficial socioeconomic effects linked to the provision of new employment uses. The Proposed Development is likely to accommodate between 1,150 and 2,430 FTE jobs. The significance of these beneficial effects is considered to be **Moderate (Significant)** at the Local and District level and **Negligible (Not Significant)** at all other spatial scales.
- 4.13.4 Employee spending generated by employment supported at the Proposed Development is estimated to be up to £7 million annually resulting in a beneficial effect. The effect is assessed to be an indirect, permanent, **Moderate Beneficial (Significant)** at the Local level and District level, and **Negligible (not significant)** at all other spatial scales.

## 5 Impact Interactions and Summary

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Environmental effects can result from incremental changes caused by the interactions between effects resulting from a project.
- 5.1.2 To ensure that the collective effect on the same environmental resource(s) between chapters is avoided, this chapter, prepared by Stantec, summarises the principal findings of each topic chapter of the ES to enable assessment of the potential for impact interactions.

### 5.2 Methodology

- 5.2.1 The assessment methodology involves the identification of impact interactions associated with both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development upon one or more environmental resources. This is undertaken using a qualitative appraisal process.

### 5.3 Demolition and Construction Effects

- 5.3.1 The residual effects during demolition and construction on Natural Resources relate to the following receptor groups:
- Ecological sites and habitats;
  - Protected species; and
  - Landscape character within the Site and surrounding area.
- 5.3.2 The residual effects during demolition and construction on Human Beings and Society relate to the following receptor groups:
- Heritage assets in the surrounding area;
  - Human receptors surrounding the Site;
  - Future Site users; and
  - Economic sectors and community.

### 5.4 Operational Effects

- 5.4.1 The residual effects during operation on Natural Resources relate to the following receptor groups:
- Ecological sites;
  - Protected species;
  - Landscape character within the Site and surrounding area; and
  - Global atmosphere.
- 5.4.2 The residual effects during operation on Human Beings and Society relate to the following receptor groups:

- Heritage assets in the surrounding area;
- Human receptors surrounding the Site.

## 5.5 Conclusions

- 5.5.1 During demolition and construction significant temporary adverse residual effects have been identified in relation to landscape and visual resources, and temporary adverse residual effects of a slight significance have been identified in relation to historic environment.
- 5.5.2 During operation, significant landscape and visual effects to the landscape characteristics of the Site have been identified, however these will change from major adverse to minor beneficial over time. Additionally, effects with a slight significance in relation to historic environment have been identified during operation.
- 5.5.3 There will be construction related impact interactions to human receptors surrounding the site during demolition and construction. This is as a result of residual temporary moderate adverse effects related to visual impacts to users of the MoD sports pitches adjacent to St Davids Barracks and residual temporary negligible to minor adverse effects related to noise at St Davids Barracks. The level of combined effects to human receptors at St David's Barracks is considered to be temporary Minor to Moderate adverse.
- 5.5.4 There are no more than minor impact interactions to natural resources or human beings and society during operation.

## **Appendix A     Site Location Plan**





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Key Plan

#### KEY

- Site Boundary
- Site by others
- Existing Buildings
- Existing Water tanks/ Reservoirs
- Existing Concrete hardstanding
- Existing Services  
(Substation, Generators, Thames water pump)

#### GENERAL NOTE

Site Area : 311,088m<sup>2</sup> (76.87 Acres / 31.11 Hactare)

- P7 28/04/2022 DRAFT FOR PLANNING (OUTLINE)
- P6 10/03/2022 FOR PLANNING (DEMO)
- DRAFT 09/03/2022 DRAFT FOR COMMENTS
- P5 17/09/2021 DRAFT FOR PRE-APP
- P4 26/02/2021 PRE-APP ELL SITE ADDED
- P3 04/11/2020 SITE BOUNDARY FINALISED
- P2 20/05/2020 SITE BOUNDARY UPDATED
- P1 15/05/2020 FOR INFORMATION

Revisions

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Client  
**Graven Hill Purchaser Ltd**

Project  
**Graven Hill D1 Site, Bicester**

Project No.  
**410**

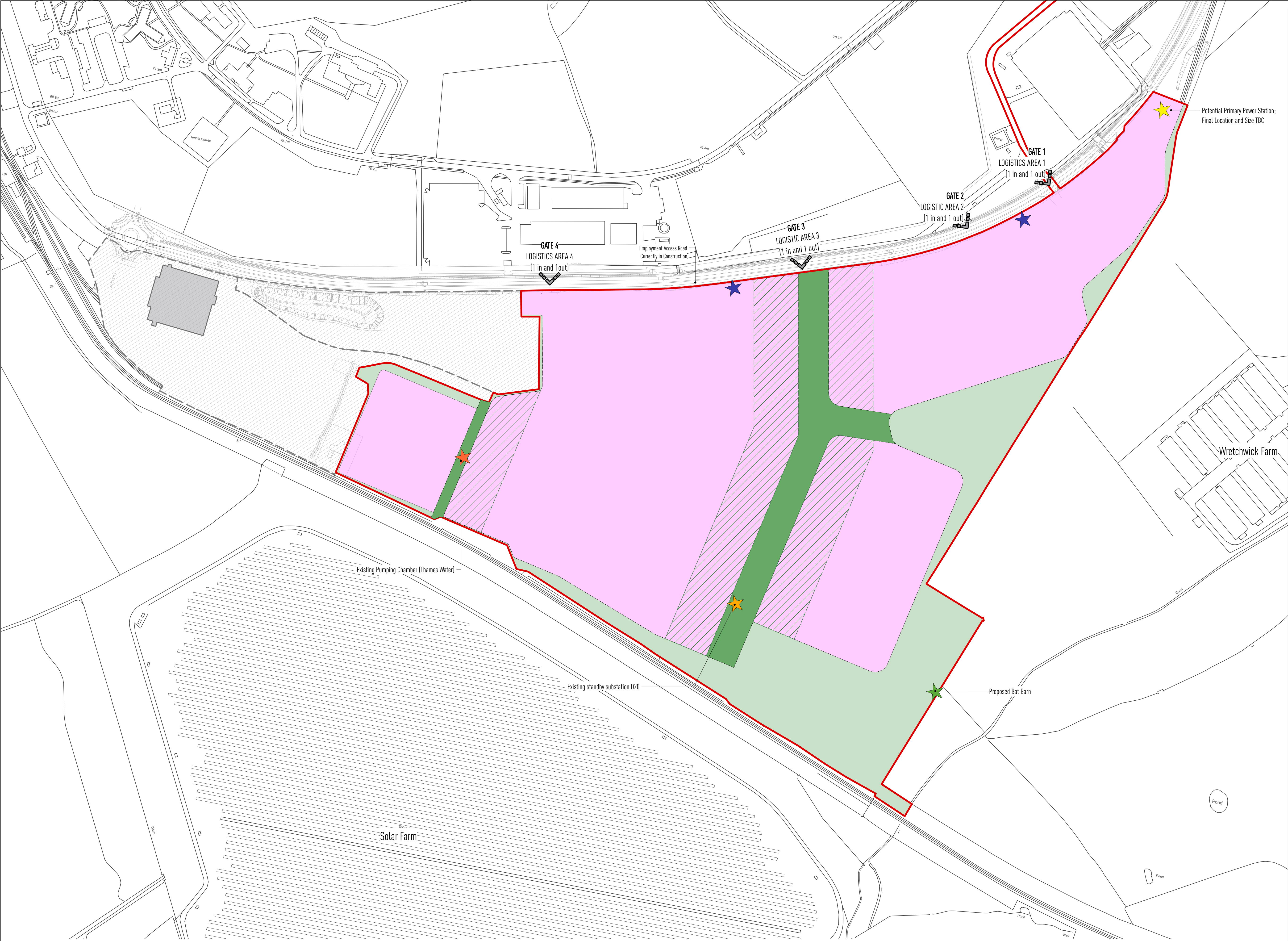
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Scale	Date	
<b>1:2500 @A1</b>	<b>May 2020</b>	
Drawing Number	Revision	
<b>410_S-00</b>	<b>P7</b>	



## **Appendix B      Key Application Drawings**





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KEY

- Site Boundary
- Extent of Employment Allocated Land
- Structural Landscape planting including Existing woodlands, Proposed Amenity and Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)
- Indicative route of Green fingers/ wildlife corridors; Final location /extent to be determined at Reserved Matters Stage
- Parameter of Green fingers/ wildlife corridors; Final location /extent to be determined at Reserved Matters Stage
- Development Area; including roads, parking and service yards; Max. 20m Ridge Height Details at Reserved Matters Stage 227,511m<sup>2</sup> (2,448,908 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Existing D20 Substation
- Existing Thames Water Pumping Station
- New Sub-stations (as part of EAR Dev.)
- New Bat Barn
- Indicative location for Potential Primary Power Station

Refer to 410\_S-50 Indicative Proposed Plan and ABA's Transport Report for detailed Gate/ Entrance Layout

P2	10/05/2022 FOR COMMENTS
P1	09/05/2022 FOR DISCUSSION
Revisions	

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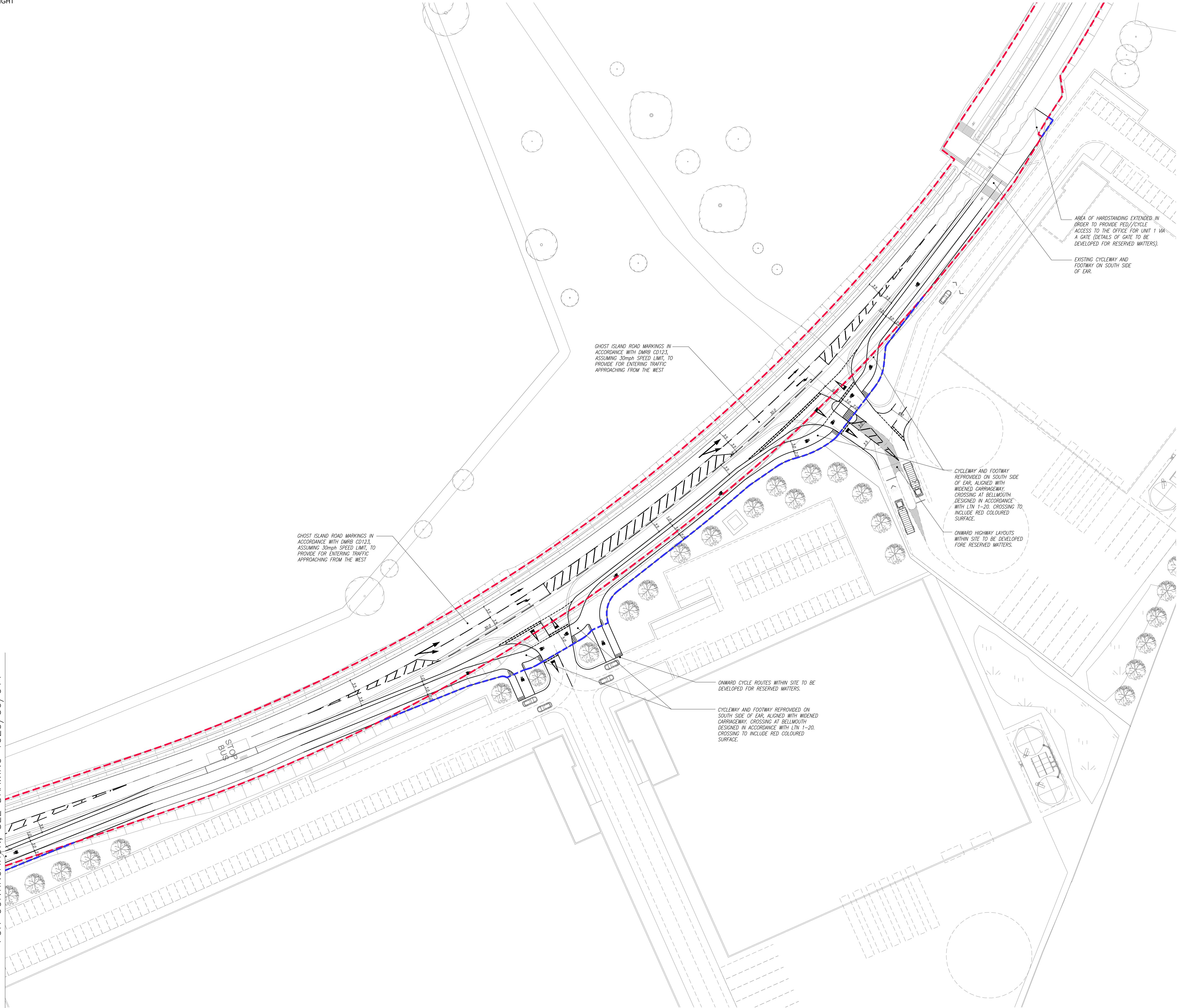
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Project	Graven Hill D1 Site, Bicester	410

Drawing Title  
**PROPOSED LAYOUT PARAMETER PLAN**

Status	Drawn	Checked
PRELIMINARY	JH	GO
Scale	Date	
1:2000 @A1	MAY 2022	
Drawing Number	Revision	
410_S-51	P2	



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C	13.05.22	ROAD MARKINGS UPDATED.	MBr
B	22.04.22	BACKGROUND UPDATED.	MBr
A	01.04.22	CYCLEWAY AMENDED.	MBr
	23.03.22	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION.	MBr

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GRAVEN HILL,  
BICESTER

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EMPLOYMENT ACCESS ROAD,  
GATE 1 & 2 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS,  
FUTURE SCENARIO

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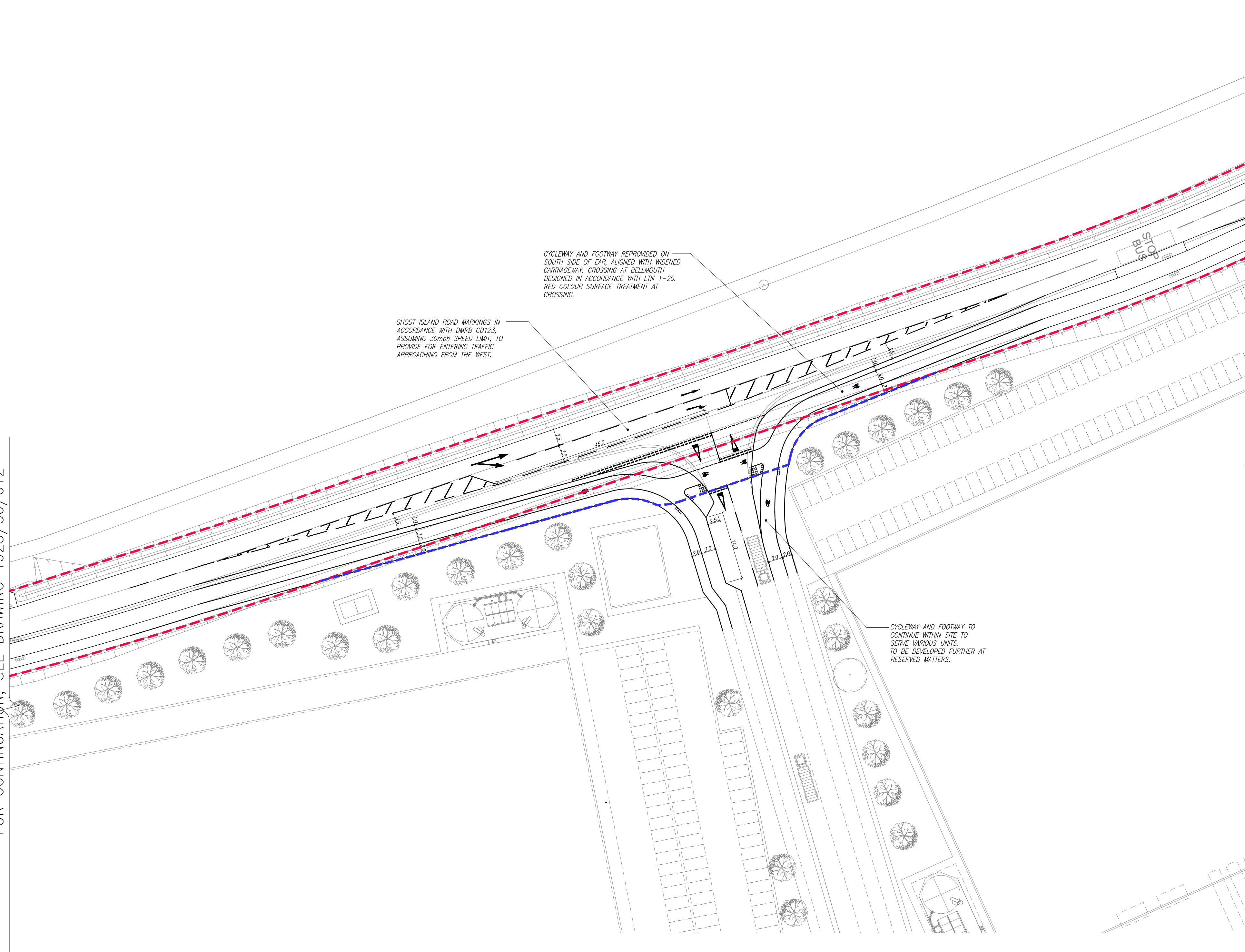
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FUTURE SCENARIO

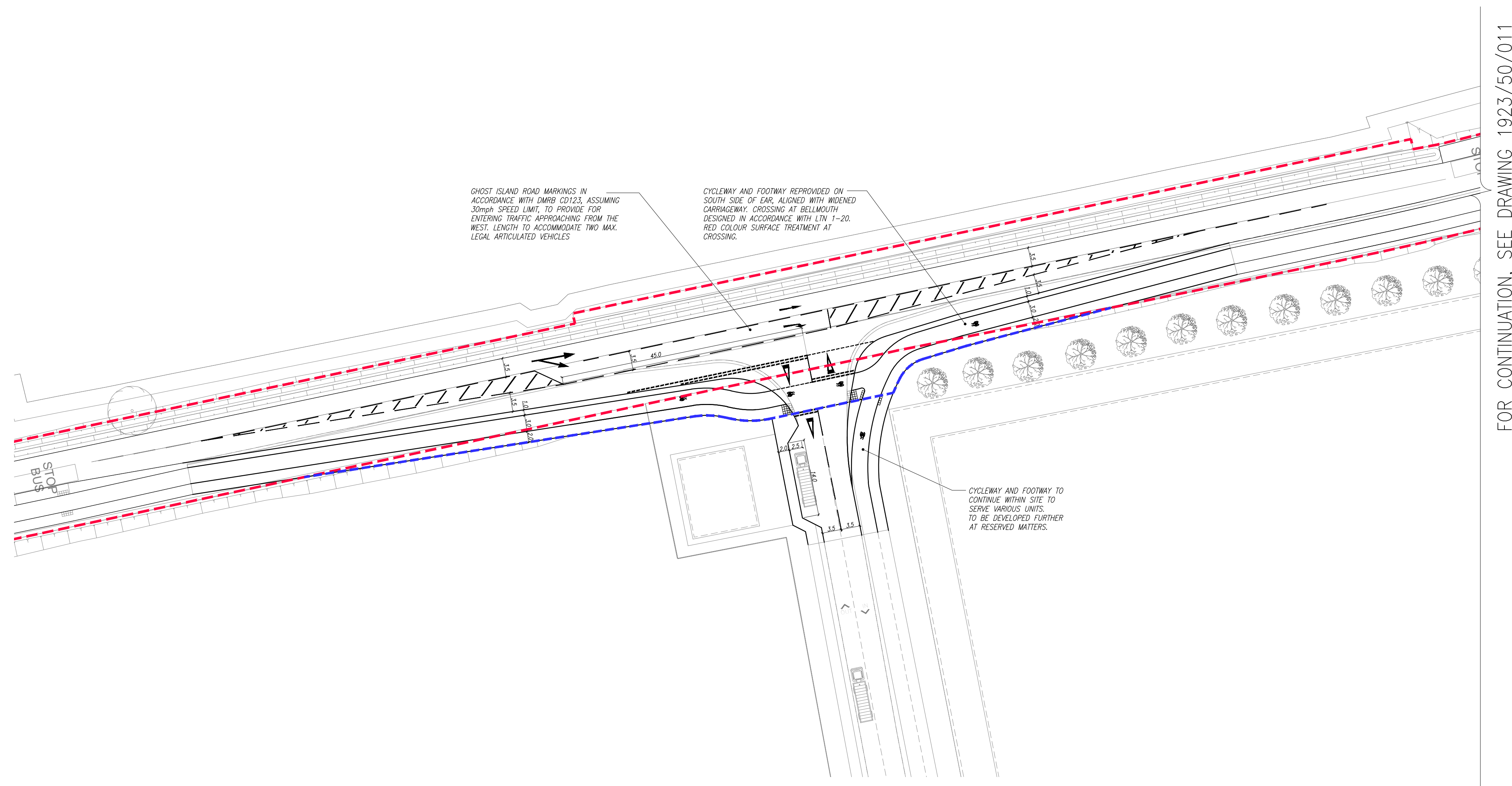
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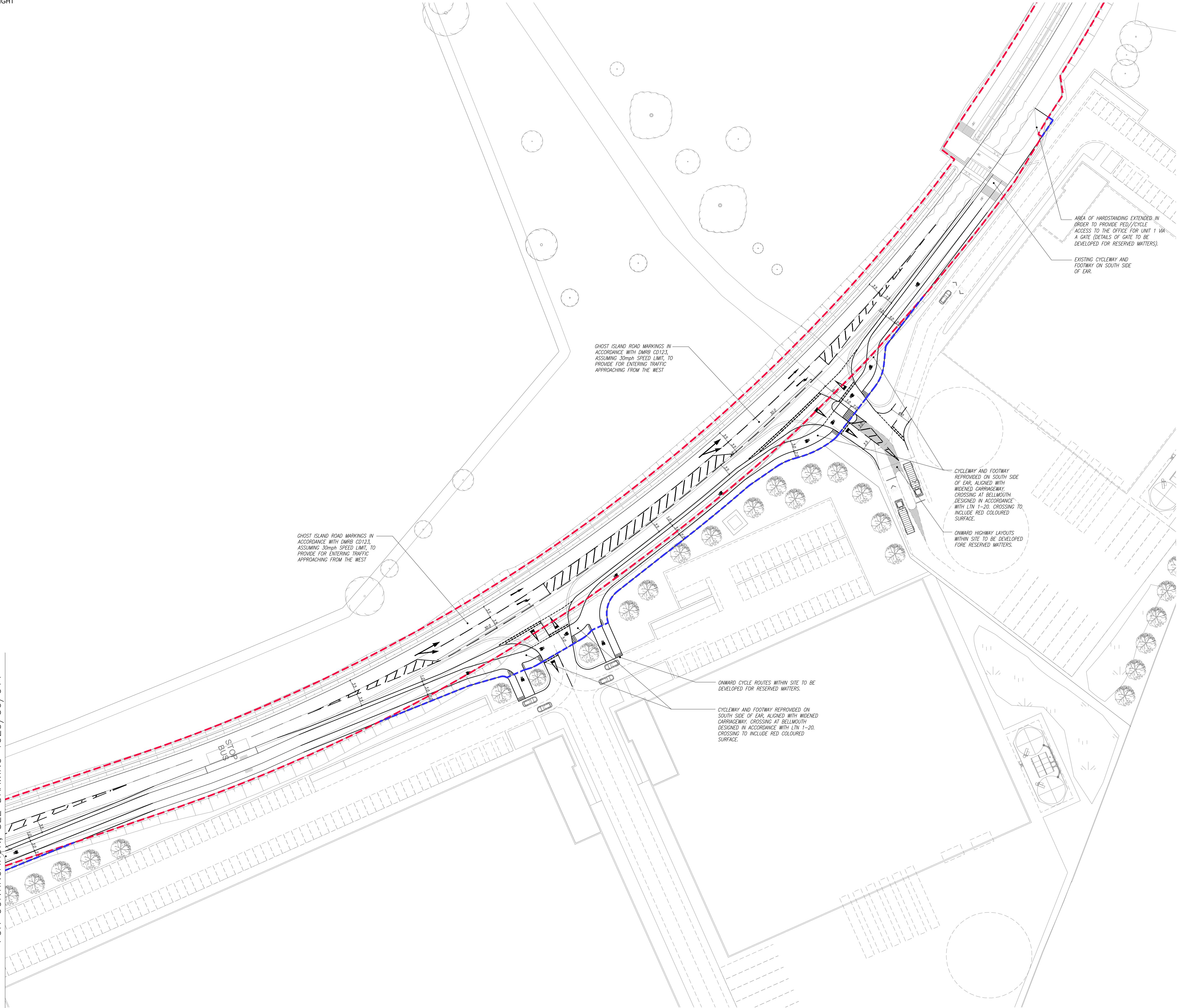
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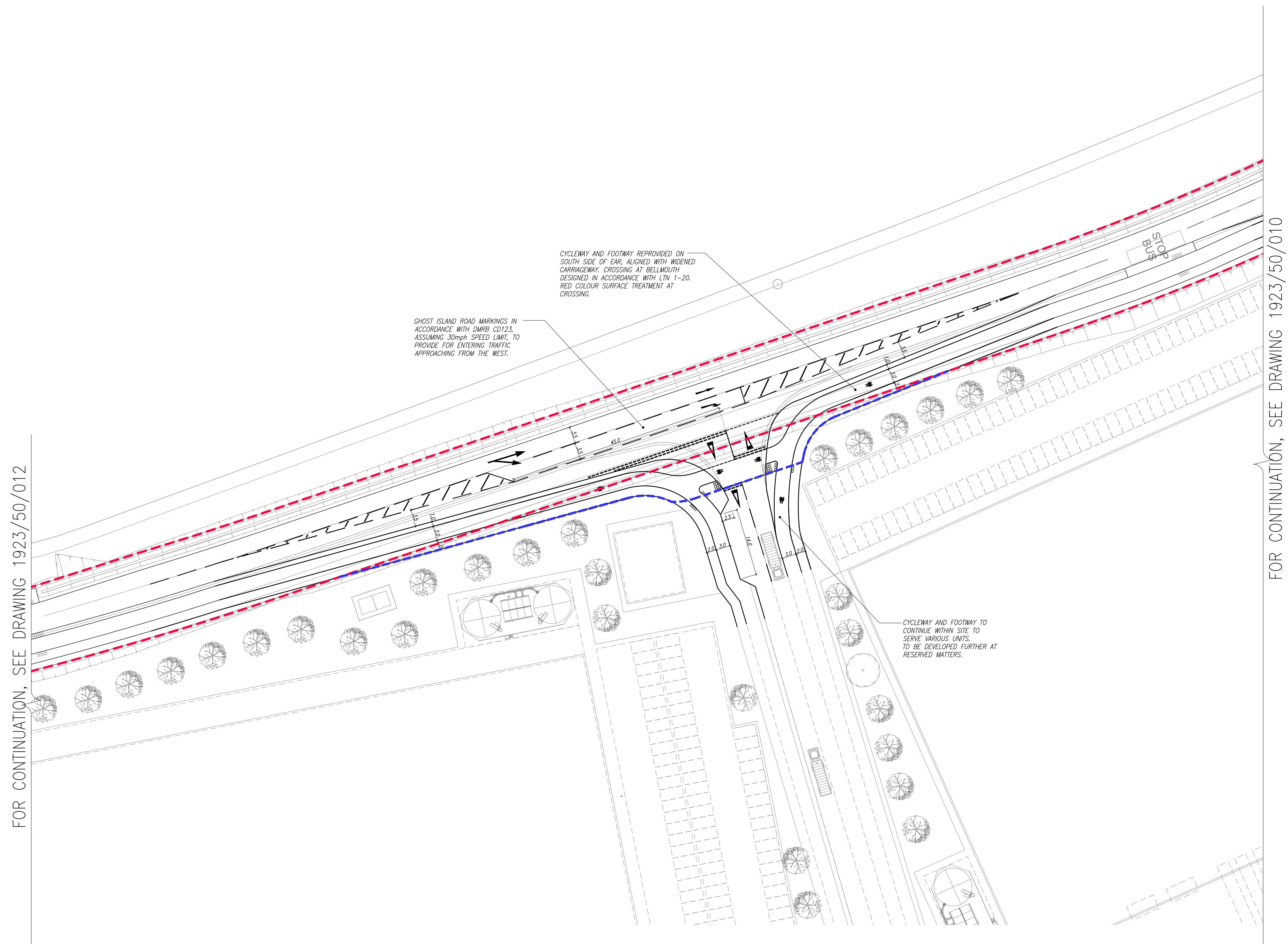
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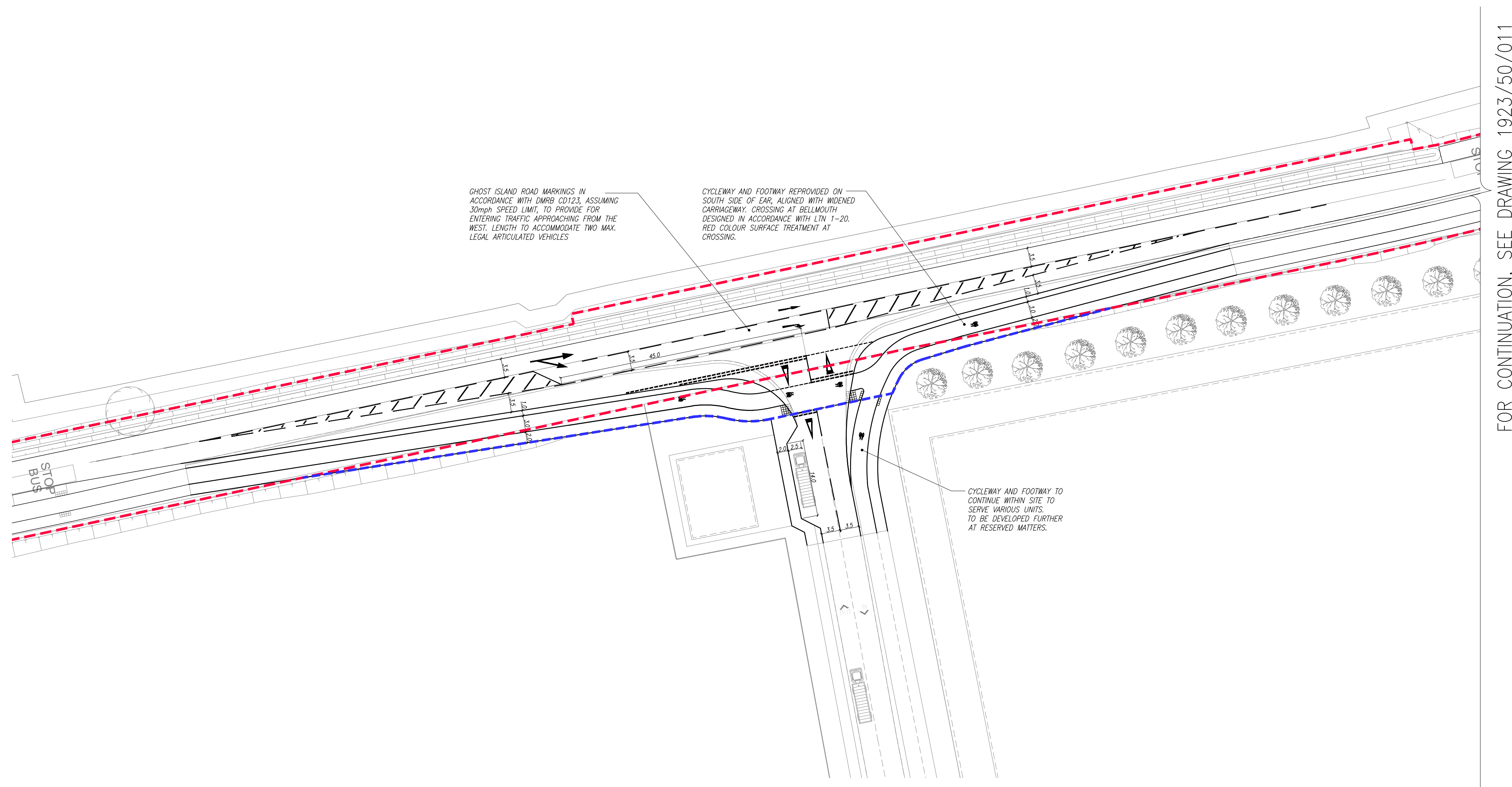
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BICESTER

title  
EMPLOYMENT ACCESS ROAD,  
GATE 4 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS,  
FUTURE SCENARIO

drawn  
UJ  
date  
MAR'22

checked  
MBr  
scale (original - A1)  
1:500

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