

VISTRY GROUP

THAXTED ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN

TRANSPORT TECHNICAL NOTE: BUS TURNING

REPORT REF.

2404920-03

March 2025

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**THAXTED ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN
TRANSPORT TECHNICAL NOTE: BUS TURNING**

**2404920-03
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Document Control Sheet

REV	ISSUE PURPOSE	AUTHOR	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
-	Draft	SAF	IW	DRAFT	28.02.2025
-	Issue to ECC	SAF	IW	SAF	04.02.2025

Distribution

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Ardent Consulting Engineers (ACE) is retained by Vistry Group to advise on the transport and infrastructure aspects of the proposed development at Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden.
- 1.2. Outline planning consent with all matters reserved except for access (under application ref. UTT/23/3112/PINS & S62A/2023/0031) was granted with conditions in April 2024 for: *for the erection of up to 55 dwellings, associated landscaping and open space, with access from Knight Park.*
- 1.3. Condition 20 attached to the Outline consent is as follows: *Prior to first occupation of the proposed development, the Developer shall submit to the Local Planning Authority for approval, in consultation with the highway authority, details relating to necessary bus facilities on the site, consistent with the principles set out in the February 2024 Transport Statement and its appendices. Once approved, the Developer will ensure that the bus facilities are retained in that approved form at all times and kept free of obstruction.*
- 1.4. A Reserved Matters application pursuant to the Outline consent was submitted in December 2024 and validated in January 2025 (application ref. UTT/25/0101/PINS & S62A/2024/0075). This was preceded by formal pre-application discussions with Essex County Council (ECC), as highway authority, in relation to bus facilities as referred to in Condition 20.
- 1.5. This Transport Technical Note (TTN) has been prepared to provide ECC with a suite of information suitable to inform its consultation response on the application and, specifically, the suitability of proposed bus facilities on the application site in the context of: the existing provision for bus turning; and efforts made by the applicant to agree a suitable solution within the confines of the Outline consent with ECC.

2. Outline Planning Consent

- 2.1. ECC's initial consultation response on the Outline Application (dated 09/02/2024) identifies that: *The highway authority has plans to introduce two new regular services which will terminate/begin at the Knight Retail Park. Our plans involve using the existing turning head to turn buses, which will not be possible if the access to the development is constructed. As such, we request that appropriate bus turning facilities be provided on the development site – this could take the form of the central loop road of the proposed development being designed as suitable for buses.*
- 2.2. The bus turning facility is not required to enable bus access for residents of the site given that bus services are available from stops on Thaxted Road within a 400m walk catchment.
- 2.3. It is relevant to note that the existing turning head at the end of the Knight Park access road is of insufficient size to accommodate the three-point turn of a 12m long single deck bus, as shown on **drawing no. 2404920-ACE-XX-OO-DR-C-003**. The existing turning head is shown at **Figure 2.1**.



Figure 2.1: Existing Turning Head (Source: Google Streetview)

- 2.4. It is therefore assumed that the two new regular bus services that ECC plan to introduce would be served by a smaller vehicle such as a midibus rather than a single deck bus.

- 2.5. Following ECC’s initial consultation response to the Outline Application (09/02/2024), Milestone (consultants) prepared an updated Transport Statement (TS) on behalf of the applicant. The TS identified at para 4.35 that: *In addition, and as confirmed by the swept path analysis included as Appendix 5 to the TS, the internal street network within the Site has been designed to accommodate the swept path analysis of a bus such that it can turn, in lieu of the existing turning head which is to be removed as part of the proposed Site Access works...*
- 2.6. The swept path analysis referred to as included in Appendix 5 in the TS is shown at **Figure 2.2**. It is relevant to note that this shows a 12m long single deck bus turning within the illustrative site masterplan using an internal loop road. The use of a 12m long single deck bus for the tracking exercise is robust given that the existing turning head cannot accommodate the turning movements of that vehicle.



Figure 2.2: Swept Path Analysis (Source: Milestone drg. no. 23075-TK01)

- 2.7. Following submission of the updated TS and swept path analysis, ECC provided an updated consultation response to the Outline Application (dated 11/03/2024) stating that: *The highway authority has plans to introduce two new regular services which will terminate/begin at the Knight Retail Park. As the development access works would require the removal of the existing turning head, we requested that the*

internal loop road of the proposed development be suitable for bus services to use for turning – we welcome the applicant’s offer to facilitate this and have suggested a condition to that effect.

2.8. ECC’s suggested condition was as follows: *Prior to first occupation of the proposed development, the Developer shall submit to the Local Planning Authority for approval, in consultation with the highway authority, details relating to bus facilities on the site, including the ability for a bus to turn using the development’s internal loop road as shown in principle on drawing 23075-TK01, and stop facilities if required by the highway authority. Once approved, the Developer will ensure that the turning route is retained in that form at all times and kept free of obstruction.*

2.9. The Inspector’s Decision Notice and Statement of Reasons relating to the Outline application includes the following background relating to bus services / facilities at Para 18:

There are existing bus services to Knight Park, and there are proposals in place to improve them. Specifically connected to those services, this application now includes provision to allow bus services to Knight Park to turn within the site, and the planning obligation includes a contribution towards bus infrastructure.

2.10. The Decision Notice goes on to state that:

ECC Highways initially objected to the proposal on the basis of concerns over active travel, public rights of way, buses and vehicular routes to and within the site (Para 36); and

Following the submission of an updated Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan alongside updates to sketch layouts and commitments within the planning obligation, ECC Highways now consider the proposal to be acceptable from a highways and transportation position. The proposal now includes means of protecting public rights of way close to and within the site, a residential travel plan to encourage more sustainable means of travel than the private car and commitments to improve bus accessibility (Para 37).

2.11. The Decision Notice includes the following commentary on Conditions at Para 56:

The condition suggested by ECC around any future layout and bus turning has been modified in response to the comments of the applicant. In my view it now better reflects the current status of bus service provision and improvements in the area,

whilst retaining the ability to implement the principles set out in the TS, which were found acceptable to and by ECC as highway authority.

2.12. As identified earlier, Condition 20 attached to the Outline consent is as follows: *Prior to first occupation of the proposed development, the Developer shall submit to the Local Planning Authority for approval, in consultation with the highway authority, details relating to necessary bus facilities on the site, consistent with the principles set out in the February 2024 Transport Statement and its appendices. Once approved, the Developer will ensure that the bus facilities are retained in that approved form at all times and kept free of obstruction.*

2.13. Other Planning Conditions of note, and which constrain bus turning options, include:

4. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

i. Site Location Plan No. 3119-A-1000-PR-D,

ii. Access Plan No. 3119-A-1202-PR-E,

iii. Proposed Access Drawing No. 23075/001 Rev B (Appendix 5 to the Transport Statement).

16. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the access works shown on drawing 23075/001 Rev B have been completed.

2.14. Approved Access Plan No. 3119-A-1202-PR-E (see **Figure 2.3**, overleaf) includes a note which states that "development cells / road alignment can deviate by up to 10m upon detailed design". This essentially precludes highway infrastructure being located any more than 10m from the pink shaded area shown on the approved plan.

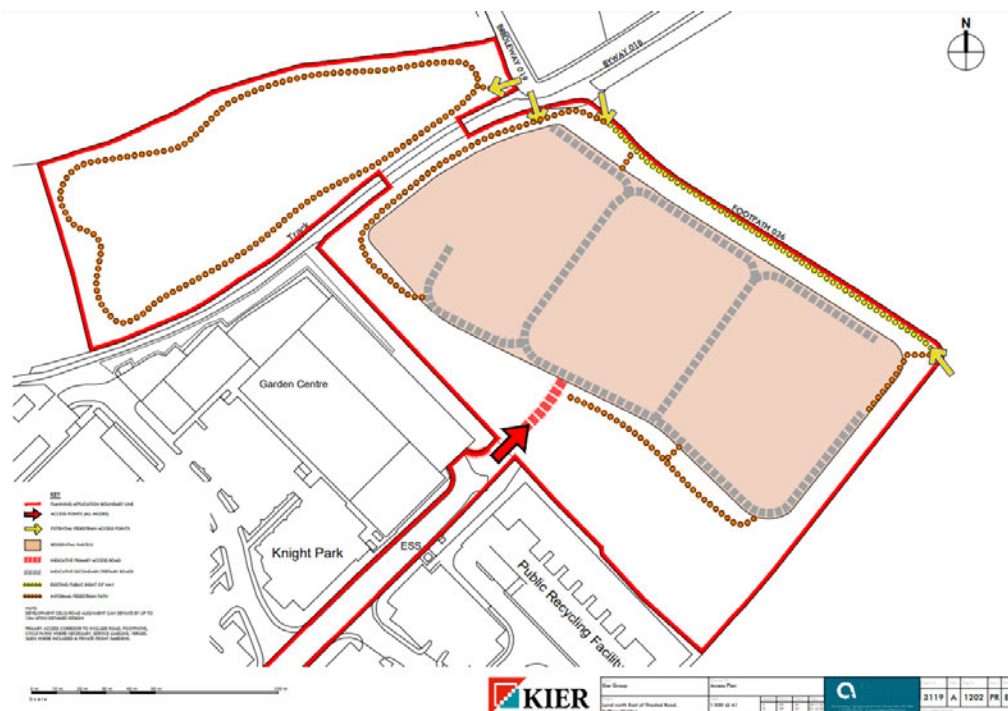


Figure 2.3: Access Plan (Source: Kier drg. no. 3119-A-1202-PR-E)

2.15. The approved Access Drawing No. 23075/001 Rev B is shown at **Figure 2.4**.

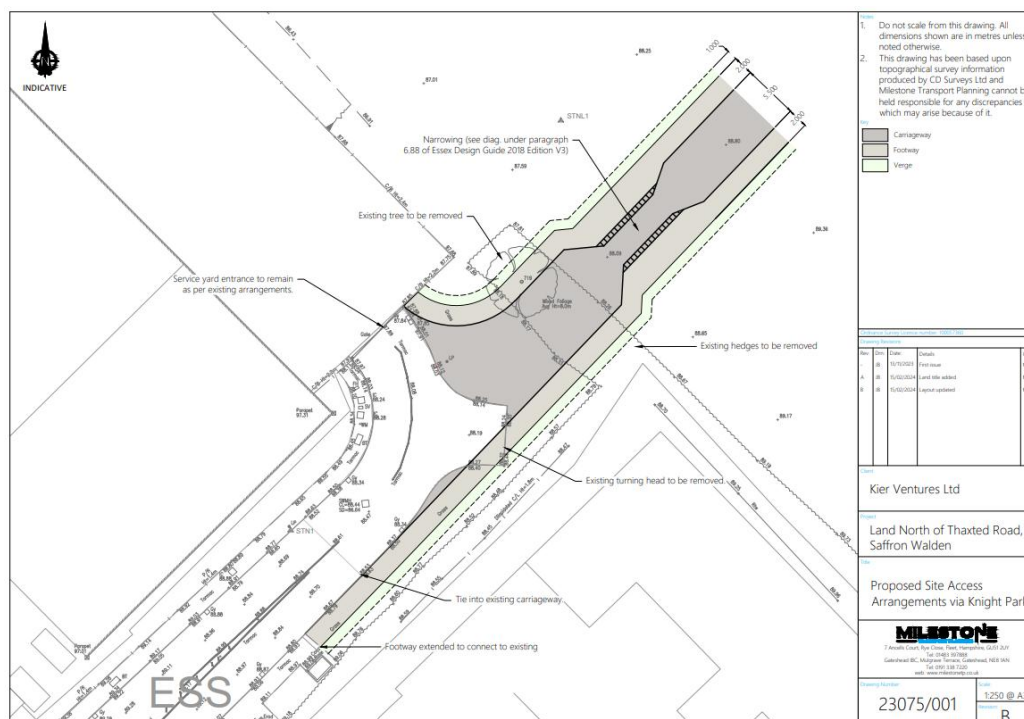


Figure 2.4: Access Drawing (Source: Milestone drg. no. 23075/001 Rev B)

2.16. The approved access drawing comprises an extension on the existing Knight Park access road, with the existing turning head removed and traffic calming narrowing

included in advance of a 5.5m wide carriageway with 2m wide footways extending north-east to serve the residential development.

2.17. Indeed, the bus swept path analysis (**Figure 2.2**) undertaken by Milestone on the indicative masterplan network takes into no account the appropriate geometry that would be required for a single deck bus. Whilst the tracking shows a vehicle could utilise the parcel loop arrangement, the bus would need to position itself across the full length of carriageway at various points within the site. It is presumably this latter point that requires the second part of Condition 20 (that the Developer must seek to prevent parking and obstructions within the development).

Summary

2.18. The development layout is bound by the designs and principles set out in the consented scheme, summarised as follows:

- The principle of a loop road for the bus to turn within the site is referenced in Condition 20 of the planning consent, which requires bus facilities consistent with the principles set out in the February 2024 Transport Statement;
- The consented access arrangement needs to be adhered to and includes a narrowing at the entrance and so restricts what can be provided adjacent to the access road; and
- The road infrastructure cannot be altered outside of a 10m offset from the development cells / road alignment (as per the agreed Access Plan).

2.19. Further, the existing turning head at the end of the Knight Park access road is of insufficient size to accommodate the turning movements of a 12m long single deck bus. As such, in the present situation a smaller vehicle such as a midibus would need to operate on the proposed route rather than a single deck bus.

3. Pre-Application Engagement

- 3.1. A pre-application meeting was held with ECC on 25th September 2024, where the proposed scheme layout was generally well received. The meeting focused on the provision for bus turning facilities on-site, as Conditioned by the Outline Consent.
- 3.2. ECC voiced reservations at the meeting over the provision of a loop road for buses to turn on-site notwithstanding that the principle of this form of turning is referenced in Condition 20 of the Outline consent. ECC identified that alternative options for bus turning should be considered as a preference.
- 3.3. ECC were asked for clarity on how bus turning on site should be dealt with and feedback on whether a turning head would be appropriate. Details were also requested on the proposed bus service for Knight Park.
- 3.4. Following an ECC request at the meeting, swept path analysis for a bus turning circle was undertaken to show land-take and impact on constraints attached to the Outline Consent. The swept path shown at **Figure 3.1** (overleaf) was presented, and it was identified that this option was not feasible due to:
- the road layout needing to deviate from the approved Access Drawing No. 23075/001 Rev B (see **Figure 2.4**); and
 - the changes required being beyond the 10m offset within which the highway infrastructure could be located as per approved Access Plan No. 3119-A-1202-PR-E (see **Figure 2.3**).
- 3.5. It is relevant to note that a bus turning circle would require a minimum of a 22m corridor / area width (carriageway edge to edge), and so far in excess of the 10m deviation permissible as noted above. For local reference purposes, the bus turning circle at Mortimers Gate in Saffron Walden has a 27m width (see **Figure 3.2**, overleaf). This facility has been referred to by ECC in post-submission discussions on this matter. Such provision has significant land-take and cannot be accommodated within the parameters of the extant Outline planning consent.

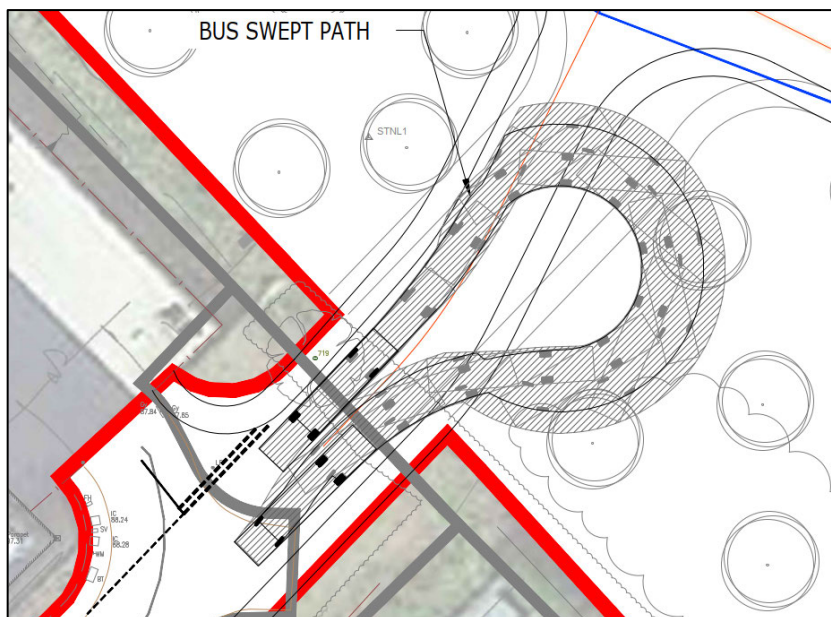


Figure 3.1: Bus Turning Circle (Source: Ardent email dated 21/10/24)



Figure 3.2: Bus Turning Circle at Mortimers Gate (Source: Google Maps)

3.6. Following provision of the bus turning circle tracking identified above, ECC were provided with two sketch options on 10th October 2024 showing a potential bus turning loop on-site that followed ECC's preference in its consultation response on the outline application (see **Section 2**). These sketch option drawings are included

in **Appendix A**. A request was made for feedback on the arrangement to enable the progression of the scheme layout prior to application.

3.7. ECC responded on 17th October 2024 and identified that:

Where we have buses following similar routes to what you are proposing it typically isn't seen with a positive view from the residents which is why we would prefer to see the bus turning separate to the development with its own turning head or even ideally if you were to provide a roundabout that would accommodate this movement, as suggested by our colleagues in Passenger Transport team. A roundabout would actually remove the need for the road narrowing which is also not ideal.

The only concern in relation to turning heads is that you need to apply parking restrictions to keep the area clear for the use of the bus only.

Looking at the tracking from Faye's email the area needed is not excessive so alternatives can be delivered.

3.8. ECC also confirmed at this time that the bus service at Knight Park is to be funded by other development and ECC are waiting for the funds to be available before the service can be enabled.

3.9. Given ECC feedback, site constraints were reiterated in an email sent on 21st October 2024, and it was highlighted that progression on the scheme was necessary in-lieu of ECC comments and that the RM application is bound by the designs and principles set by the Outline Consent. No further comment was received from ECC in advance of the application being submitted.

Section Summary

3.10. The pre-application discussions with ECC Highways following the consent of the Outline scheme reaffirmed the constraints that the scheme is experiencing.

3.11. ECC has acknowledged that a bus turning facility is required due to removal of the existing turning head, but the approach to achieving this has not been agreed with the Developer pre-application.

3.12. The ECC position for turning a vehicle on-site has been amended from that at the Outline consent (which agreed that a looped arrangement would be acceptable).

3.13. ECC's request to turn a vehicle within the site via a turning arrangement (e.g. the Mortimer Gate example) would result in significant landtake and deviation from the consented Access Plan for where infrastructure could be placed.

3.14. As a compromise, ACE has investigated alternative options that would not affect either landtake or the consented Access Plan or the Access Drawing. Whilst it is acknowledged that these would not provide a bus loop around the development parcel, the principle of bringing a bus route into the site and out again is achieved.

3.15. Without the ability to close out such matters at the pre-application stage, the applicant was forced to submit a planning application without ready agreement to the emerging strategy.

4. Development Proposals

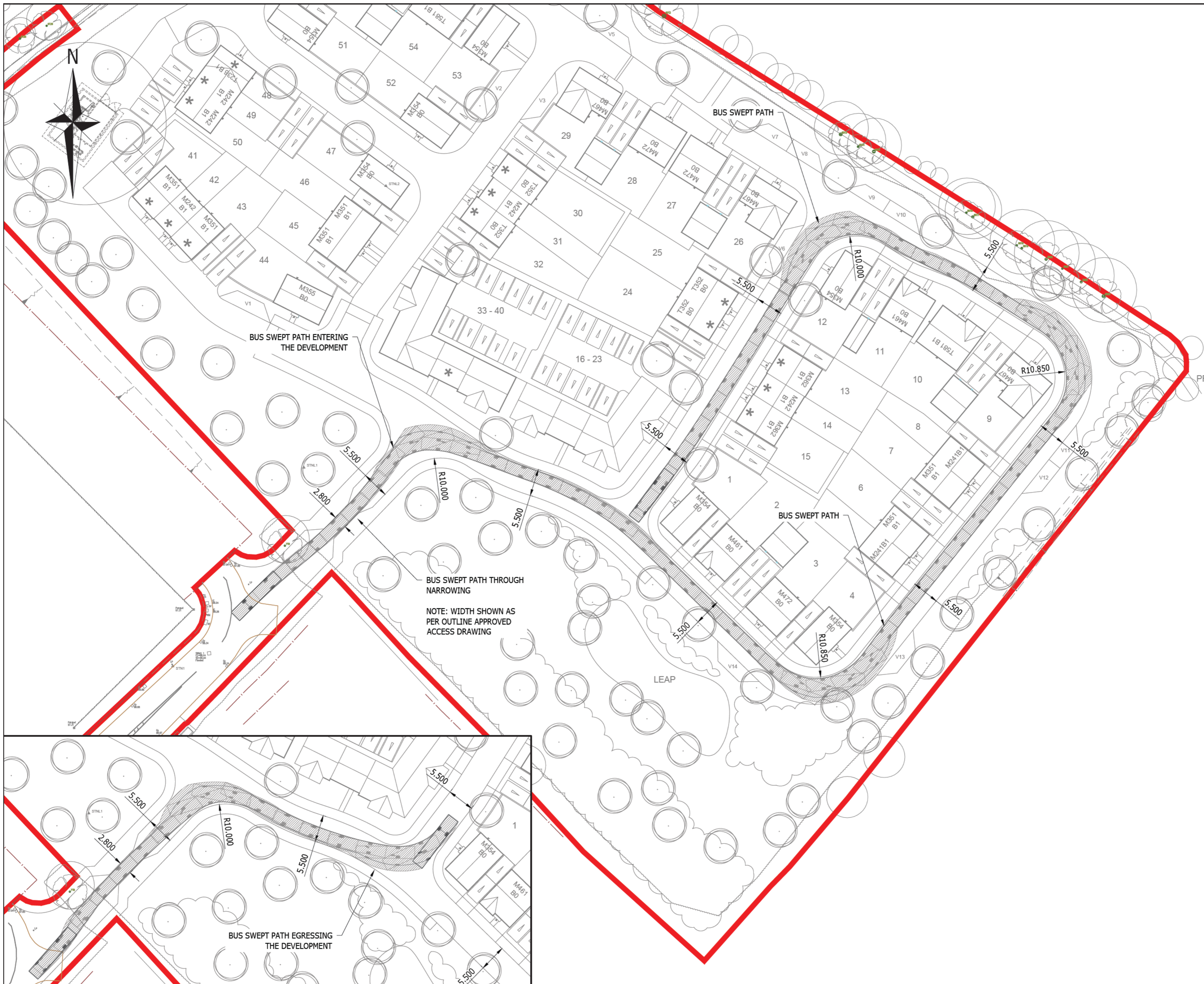
- 4.1. An application was submitted in December 2024 and validated in January 2025 for: *Reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale); discharge of conditions 5 and 17; pursuant to outline planning permission ref: S62A/2023/0031 for the erection of up to 55 dwellings, associated landscaping and open space, with access from Knight Park.*
- 4.2. The Architect's development layout plan is included at **Appendix B** and **drawing no. 2404920-ACE-XX-00-DR-C-002B** shows estate road geometry and visibility, and relevant swept path analysis.
- 4.3. It is relevant to note that the estate road layout has been designed with reference to the Essex Design Guide (EDG); however, all roads will be privately managed / maintained given the unadopted status of the connecting Knight Park access road.
- 4.4. Given the limitations set by the parameters of the extant Outline planning consent and preference from ECC for bus facilities not to be looped within the site and rather for the bus to turn within the site, the development layout includes provision for a bus to perform a 3-point turn as would be the case without the development coming forward at the Knight Park turning head.
- 4.5. Swept path analysis shown on **drawing no. 2404920-ACE-XX-00-DR-C-002B** demonstrates that there is suitable provision for a 12m long single deck bus to turn within the site, with two Options presented of where buses could turn.
- 4.6. The use of a 12m long single deck bus for the tracking exercise is robust given that the existing turning head at Knight Park cannot accommodate the turning movements of a single deck vehicle, with that being suitable for a midibus only.
- 4.7. Double yellow line waiting restrictions would be provided to keep the turning area(s) clear of vehicles in tandem with appropriate signage.

5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1. A Reserved Matters application pursuant to the Outline consent was submitted in December 2024 and validated in January 2025. This was preceded by formal pre-application discussions with ECC in relation to bus facilities on the site as referred to in Condition 20.
- 5.2. ECC has acknowledged that a bus turning facility is required due to removal of the existing turning head. It is not required to facilitate bus access for residents of the site given that bus services are available from stops on Thaxted Road within a 400m walk catchment. ECC has confirmed that the bus service at Knight Park is to be funded by other development and ECC are waiting for the funds to be available before the service can be enabled.
- 5.3. The development layout is bound by the designs and principles set out in the consented scheme. The consented access arrangement (as per the agreed Access Drawing) needs to be adhered to and includes a narrowing at the entrance and so restricts what can be provided adjacent to the road, and the road infrastructure cannot be altered outside of a 10m offset from the development cells / road alignment (as per the agreed Access Plan).
- 5.4. The pre-application discussions with ECC Highways following the consent of the Outline scheme reaffirmed the constraints that the scheme is experiencing.
- 5.5. The ECC position for turning a vehicle on-site has been amended from that at the Outline consent (which agreed that a looped arrangement would be acceptable).
- 5.6. ECC's request to turn a vehicle within the site via a turning arrangement (e.g. the Mortimer Gate example) would result in significant landtake and deviation from the consented Access Plan for where infrastructure could be placed.
- 5.7. As a compromise, alternative options have been investigated that would not affect either landtake or the consented Access Plan or the Access Drawing. Whilst it is acknowledged that these would not provide a bus loop around the development parcel, the principle of bringing a bus route into the site and out again is achieved.
- 5.8. Without the ability to close out such matters at the pre-application stage, the applicant was forced to submit a planning application without ready agreement to the emerging strategy.

- 5.9. Given the limitations set by the parameters of the extant Outline planning consent and ECC preference for bus facilities not to be looped, the development layout includes provision for a bus to perform a 3-point turn as would be the case without the development coming forward at the Knight Park turning head.
- 5.10. Swept path analysis undertaken demonstrates that there is suitable provision for a 12m long single deck bus to turn within the site. The use of a 12m long single deck bus for the tracking exercise is robust given that the existing turning head at Knight Park cannot accommodate the turning movements of a single deck vehicle, with that being suitable for a midibus only.
- 5.11. It is therefore considered that the development layout subject to the Reserved Matters application meets the requirements of Condition 20 of the Outline consent.

Appendix A
Bus Loop Sketch Options



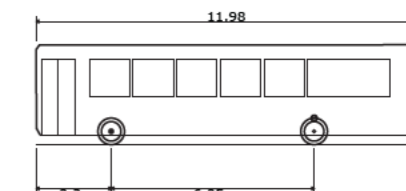
NOTES:

DESIGN SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN AND ECC APPROVAL

KEY:

— SITE BOUNDARY

VEHICLES USED:



Single Deck Bus
 Overall Length 11.980m
 Overall Width 2.440m
 Overall Body Height 3.070m
 Min Body Ground Clearance 0.306m
 Track Width 2.322m
 Lock to lock time 6.00s
 Kerb to Kerb Turning Radius 10.368m

DRAFT

Rev	Description	Drn	Chk	App	Date
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 London
 EC3M 5JE

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Client: **VISTRY EASTERN COUNTIES**

Project Title: **THAXTED ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN**

Drawing Title: **SITE LAYOUT - BUS SWEEP PATH**

A2 Scale	Date	Designed by
1:500	OCT 2024	DV
Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
DV	-	-
Drawing Number	2404920-SK01	
		Rev
		-



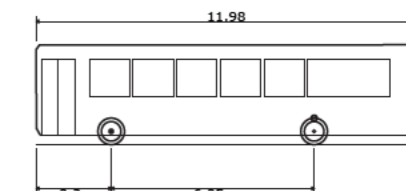
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DRAFT

Rev	Description	Drn	Chk	App	Date
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Client

VISTRY EASTERN COUNTIES

Project Title:

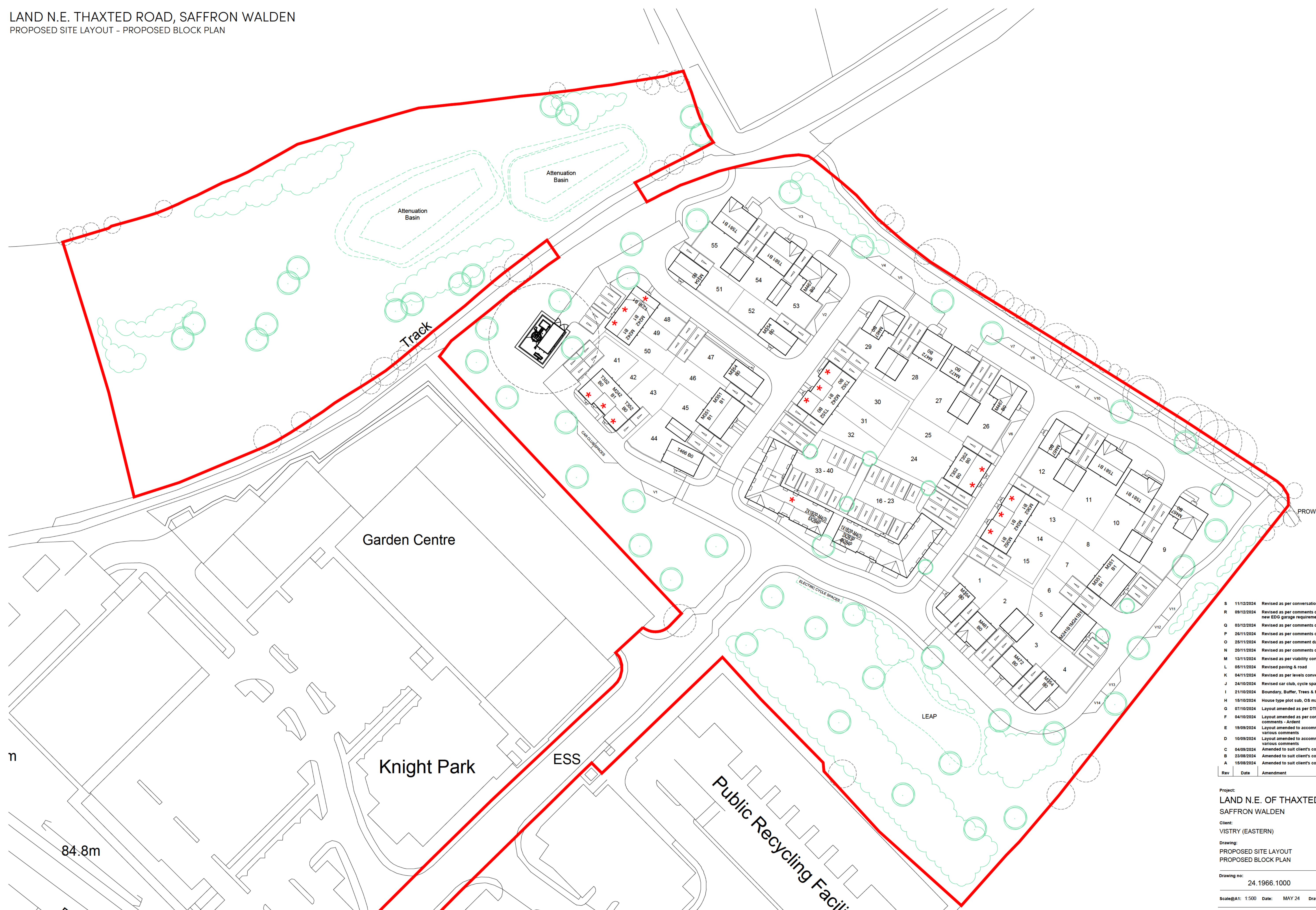
THAXTED ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN

Drawing Title:

SITE LAYOUT - BUS SWEEP PATH
 CLOCKWISE

A2 Scale	Date	Designed by
1:500	OCT 2024	DV
Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
DV	-	-
Drawing Number	2404920-SK02	
	Rev	-

Appendix B
Architect's Layout Plan



Rev	Date	Amendment	Initials
S	11/12/2024	Revised as per conversations with Ardent	CLP
R	09/12/2024	Revised as per comments dated 09.12.2024 & new EDG garage requirements	CLP
Q	03/12/2024	Revised as per comments dated 03.12.2024	CLP
P	26/11/2024	Revised as per comments dated 26.11.2024	CLP
O	25/11/2024	Revised as per comment dated 25.11.2024	CLP
N	20/11/2024	Revised as per comments dated 19.11.2024	CLP
M	13/11/2024	Revised as per viability conversations	CLP
L	05/11/2024	Revised paving & road	CLP
K	04/11/2024	Revised as per levels conversations	CLP
J	24/10/2024	Revised car club, cycle spaces & road layout	CLP
I	21/10/2024	Boundary, Buffer, Trees & Path Revised	CLP
H	15/10/2024	House type plot sub. OS map + AB revisions	CLP
G	07/10/2024	Layout amended as per DTM	CLP
F	04/10/2024	Layout amended as per consultant comments - Ardent	CLP
E	19/09/2024	Layout amended to accommodate various comments	CLP
D	10/09/2024	Layout amended to accommodate various comments	YC
C	04/09/2024	Amended to suit client's comments	LS
B	23/08/2024	Amended to suit client's comments	LS
A	15/08/2024	Amended to suit client's comments	LS

Project:
**LAND N.E. OF THAXTED ROAD
 SAFFRON WALDEN**

Client:
 VISTRY (EASTERN)

Drawing:
 PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
 PROPOSED BLOCK PLAN

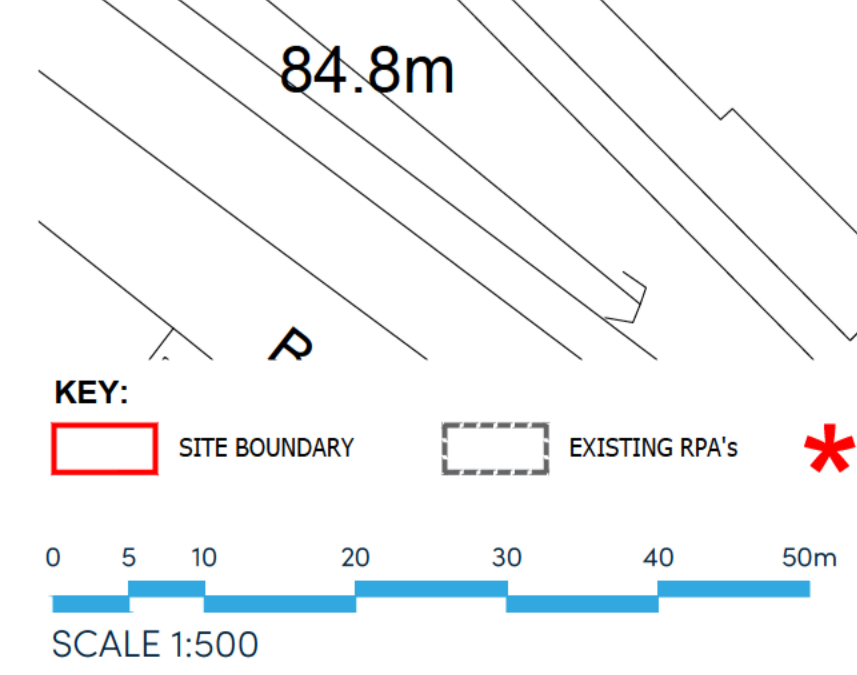
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Scale@A1: 1:500 Date: MAY 24 Drawn: GB Checked: _

PLANNING



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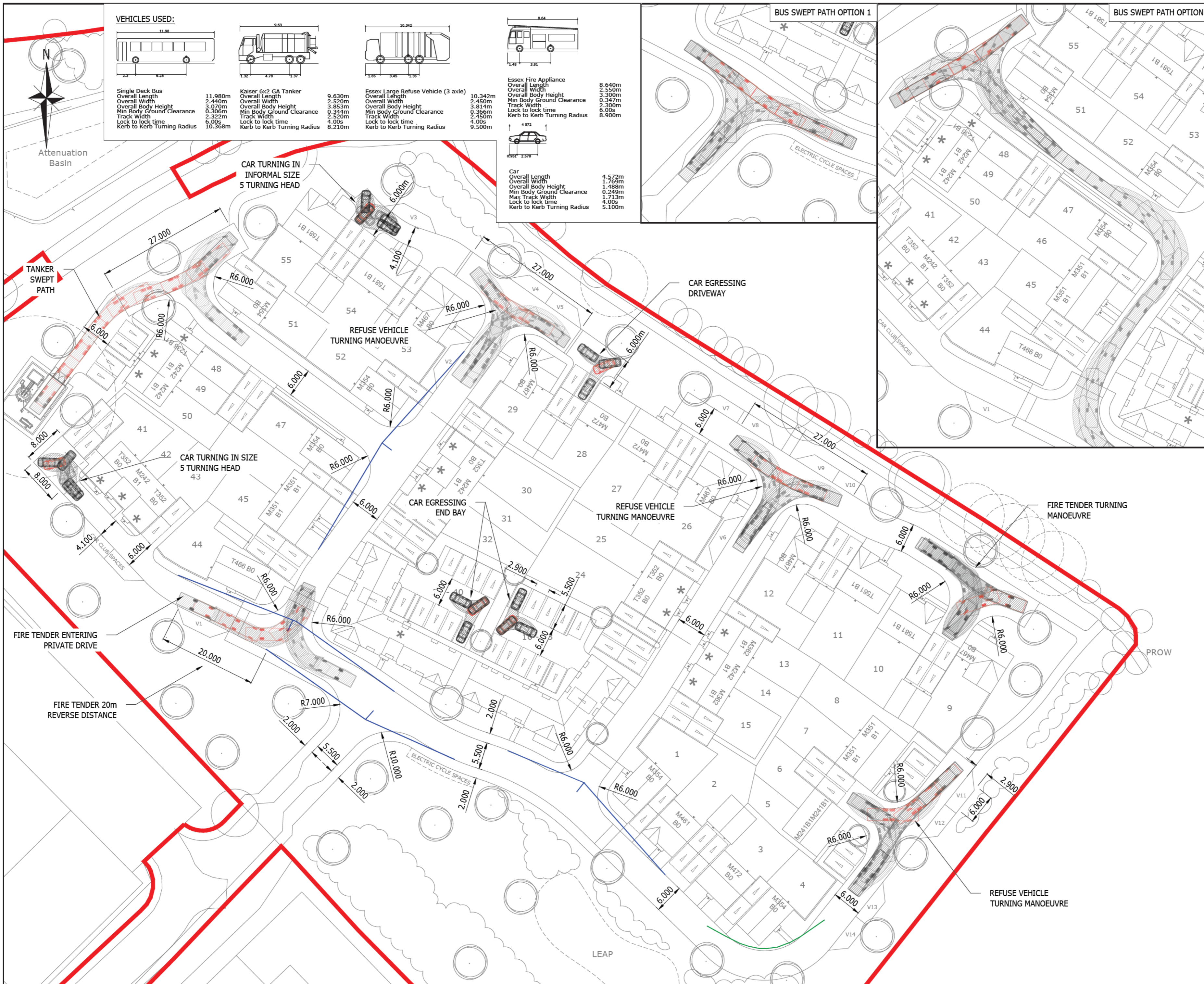


NOTE
 - Please see associated landscape masterplan for finalised landscape design

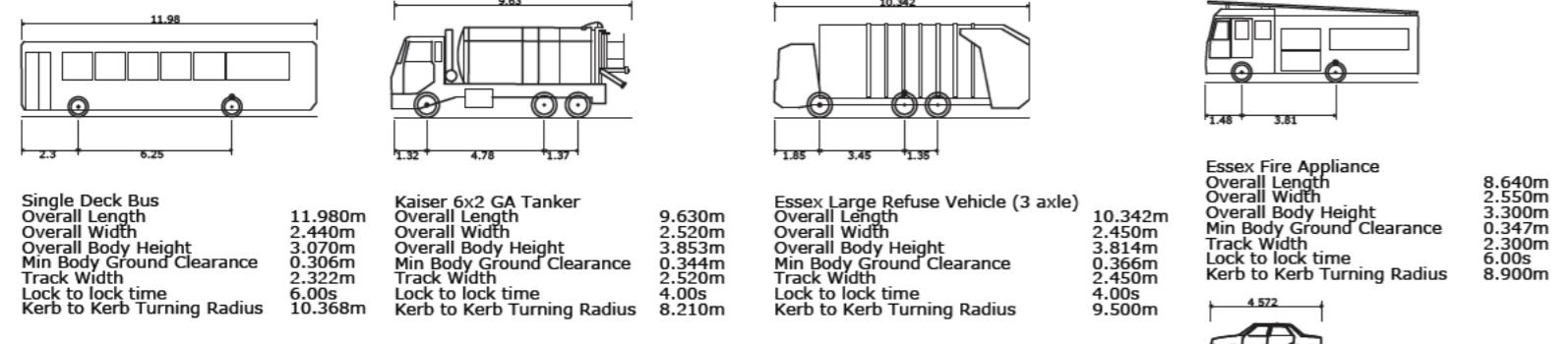
KEY:

 SITE BOUNDARY	 EXISTING RPA's	* AFFORDABLE UNITS
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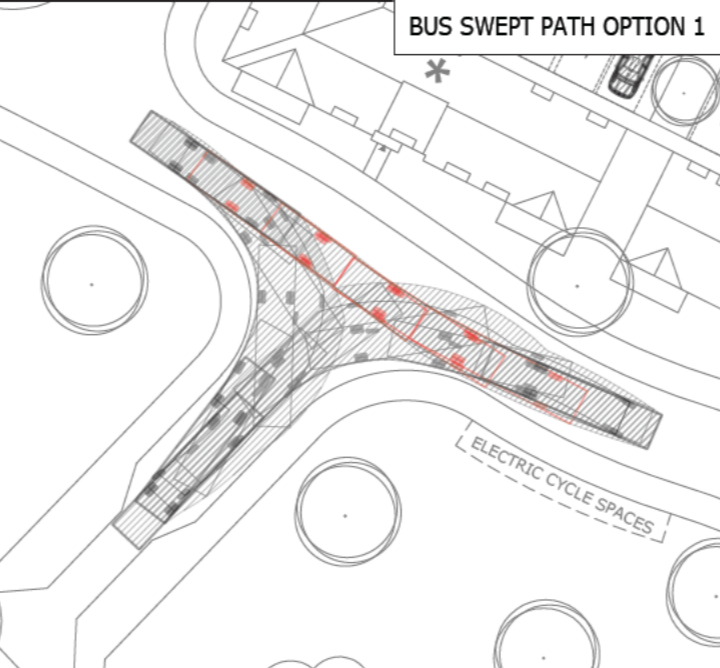
Drawings



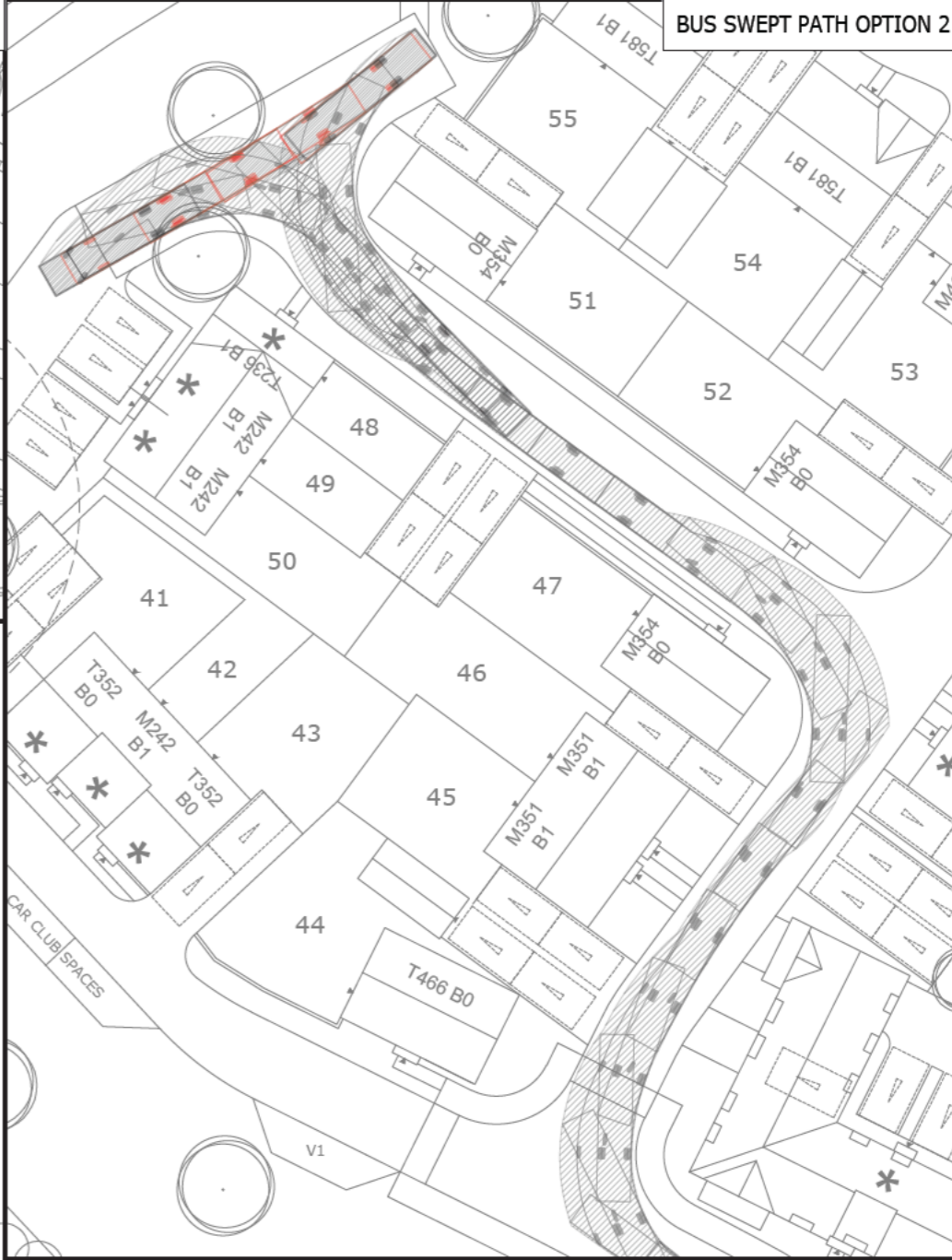
VEHICLES USED:



BUS SWEEP PATH OPTION 1



BUS SWEEP PATH OPTION 2



NOTES:

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KEY:

- SITE BOUNDARY
- 2.4m x 25m VISIBILITY SPLAY
- 14m FORWARD VISIBILITY SPLAY

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FOR INFORMATION ONLY

B	UPDATED TO LATEST LAYOUT	DV	DV	BB	13.12.24
A	UPDATED TO LATEST LAYOUT	BT	FM	SAF	06.11.24
Rev	Description	Drn	Chk	App	Date

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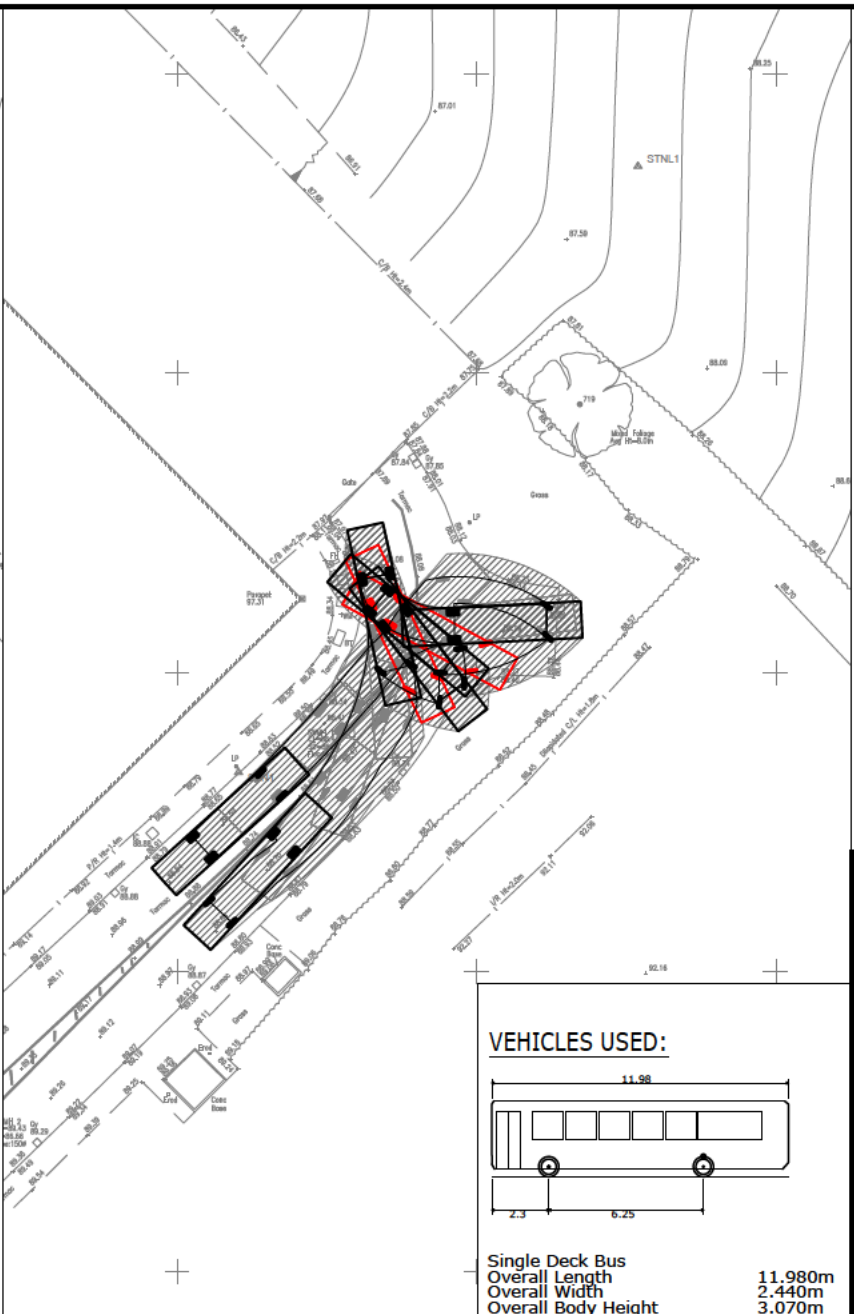
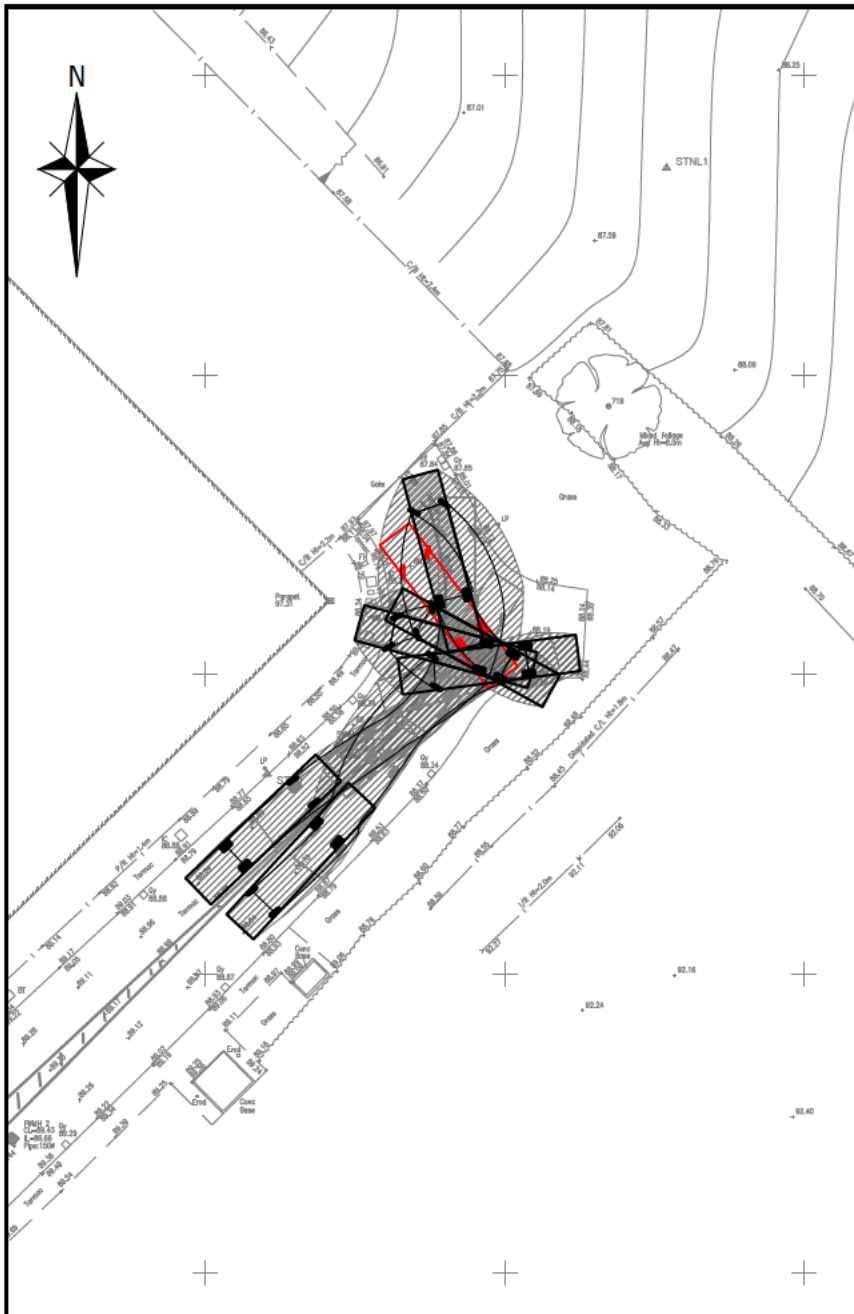
Client: **VISTRY EASTERN COUNTIES**

Project Title: **THAXTED ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN**

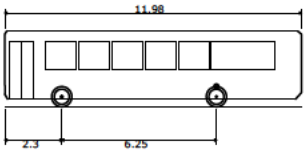
Drawing Title: **VISIBILITY & TRACKING PLAN**

A2 Scale	Date	Designed by
1:500	25.10.24	BT
Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
BT	FM	SAF

Drawing Number: **2404920-ACE-XX-00-DR-C-002** Rev **B**



VEHICLES USED:



Single Deck Bus	
Overall Length	11.980m
Overall Width	2.440m
Overall Body Height	3.070m
Min Body Ground Clearance	0.306m
Track Width	2.322m
Lock to lock time	6.00s
Kerb to Kerb Turning Radius	10.368m

Rev	Description	Drn	Chk	App	Date
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Client
VISTRY EASTERN COUNTIES

Project Title:
THAXTED ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN

Drawing Title:
EXISTING TURNING HEAD BUS TRACKING

A4 Scale	Date	Designed by
1:500	19.02.25	BT
Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
BT	BT	SAF

Drawing Number
2404920-ACE-XX-00-DR-C-003 Rev -