

Strategic Highway Consultation

Exeter City: Demolition of existing buildings at Exeter bus and coach station, no. 188 Sidwell Street and nos. 1-29 [odds] Paris Street for a comprehensive retail-leisure led mixed use development comprising Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 [retail including food and drink uses], D1 and D2 [assembly and leisure] and including a new Leisure Centre and a new bus station, with associated access, landscaping and public realm works.

Applicant: The Crown Estate and TIAA Henderson Real Estate

Application No: 15/0791/01

Date application registered by Exeter City Council: 20 July 2015

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) Exeter City Council be advised that Devon County Council as Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposal subject to the signing of a Legal agreement and imposition of planning conditions as set out in Appendix IV to this Report.**
- (b) Officers continue to work with the applicant with the aim of refining the highway proposals in advance of ECC's committee and the application being determined.**
- (c) The detailed wording of the Legal Agreement and planning conditions be delegated to the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment.**

1. Summary

1.1 This report relates to the Highway Authority response to a consultation from Exeter City Council on an outline planning application for the redevelopment of the Exeter bus and coach station.

1.2 It is considered that the main issues in terms of highway and transportation impacts are:

- The pedestrianisation of Paris Street and the impact of displaced vehicular traffic on the highway network.
- Pedestrian and cycle accessibility.
- Bus access arrangements.
- Suitability of the proposed new bus station.
- Impact on the highway network during the construction period.

2. Background/Proposal

2.1 The Crown Estate and TIAA Henderson Real Estate have submitted an outline planning application (15/0791/01) to Exeter City Council for the redevelopment of Exeter bus and coach station. This involves the demolition of existing buildings at Exeter bus station, no. 188 Sidwell Street and nos. 1-29 Paris Street to provide a mixed use retail and leisure development, including a new bus station and leisure centre (see Appendix I).

2.2 A summary of the proposed land uses are provided below:

Land Use	Size (sqm)
A1 Retail	5,375
A3 Food Retail	7,190
Bus Station	760
Cinema	1,595
Assembly/Leisure	1,240
Leisure Centre	2,800
Total	18,960

2.3 One of the most significant elements from a local highway authority perspective is the proposal to pedestrianise the section of Paris Street between Sidwell Street and Southernhay East (which serves the Princesshay car parks). To accommodate the displaced vehicular traffic, an alternative cross city route with junction improvements has been proposed via Belgrave Road/Summerland Street/York Road/King William Street and Longbrook Street (see Appendix II).

2.4 The County Council has also considered the suitability of the new bus station proposals and associated arrangements for local bus, long distance coach and tourist coach services within the city centre and provision for pedestrian and cyclists, including accessibility for all.

2.5 It is understood that the application will be determined by Exeter City Council at its Council meeting on 15 December 2015.

3. Planning Policy Considerations

3.1 The Highway Consultation Response is made in accordance with the policy provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). With respect to Transport the underlying principle of the Framework is that the *transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.*

3.2 With regards decision-making, the framework states that the following matters need to be taken into account:

- The opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
- Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- Improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.
- Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

3.4 Members will be aware from previous DM committees of the varying interpretations of severity. Nevertheless, in this instance and in accordance with the underlying principle of the NPPF, the primary planning policy consideration is whether a balance in favour of sustainable transport is achieved, if the mitigation measures are cost effective and residual cumulative impacts of development are not severe

3.5 Of the Core Strategy Policies relevant to the bus station site, Policy CP9 (Comprehensive Strategic Transport) requires “a step change in the quality, capacity

and environmental performance of public transport...” and “improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists”. CP17, which relates specifically to development in the city centre refers to creating “places that encourage social interaction” and “a high quality public realm”.

- 3.6 The County Council has also considered the Bus and Coach Station Principles document, which was adopted by the City Council in June 2012. The relevant principles that relate to the transportation elements of the bus and coach station proposals are:
- Principle C: An accessible new bus and coach station must be provided to agreed standards – it refers to enhanced safety, accessible and the need for prominent pedestrian access.
 - Principle G: Development must create a network of accessible open streets and spaces – this include access for people with disabilities and making provision for cyclists
 - Principle I: Vehicular traffic, servicing and car parking must be accommodated in such a way as to minimise their impact – this refers primarily to reducing conflicts between pedestrians and road traffic and the need for cycle parking.

4. Comment

- 4.1 The process of the development of the Bus Station site has been ongoing for a number of years where officers have been working with the city council and the applicant team. This culminated at the pre-application stage in February 2015, where the County Council provided a number of comments in respect of the draft Transport Assessment. The key transportation issues that needed addressing included the assessment methodology and the need to consider the impacts on a Saturday; further detail of the junctions on the wider network – additional design was required to demonstrate that the network can operate safely and efficiently. Finally, clarification was needed on the operational arrangements for the bus station, including layover bay provision and how these impacted on the proposed local road network changes.
- 4.2 The planning submission in July 2015 did not include an updated Transport Assessment; however, a series of meetings have been held with the applicant’s consultants to work through the outstanding issues. In addition, the transport consultants have met with officers and Exeter County Councillors and with officers and the St James’ Forum. Through these meetings, additional local concerns were raised relating to parking for tourist coaches and the suitability of on-street provision for National Express/Megabus coaches. The County Council formally received updated plans and analysis on 10 and 11 November 2015. The outstanding issues are considered below.

Methodology

- 4.3 The consultants have addressed a number of the technical points raised. The County Council requested a more robust assessment that gives some confidence in the resilience of the network following any changes. An uplift of 10% on the baseline flows was applied to the recorded neutral month traffic flows and a Saturday peak assessment was undertaken. The revised analysis better reflects the larger daily variations than occur on city centre routes.
- 4.4 The alternative vehicular route via King William Street is more circuitous and less convenient for drivers. This is likely to discourage traffic from using the route and adjust their route across the city at an earlier part of the journey (e.g. using Western

Way/Exe Bridges for routes to the A377). The submitted analysis assumes that 85% of the existing Paris Street traffic will transfer onto the alternative route. Experience from previous changes to Paris Street in 2005 and in 2012, saw reductions of around 40% - the assumptions are therefore considered suitably robust.

Pedestrian/Cycle Accessibility

- 4.5 Giving priority to sustainable transport modes and providing safe and suitable access for all modes are core principles of the NPPF. With no additional parking provided but with the development expected to attract more people to the city centre for a longer period, it is important that the development delivers facilities and infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport that are attractive and encourage people to consider alternative travel options to the car.
- 4.6 The proposals to prohibit vehicular traffic on the top section of Paris Street between Southernhay East and Sidwell Street is an opportunity to create a high quality, vibrant public space for visitors. This area has a very high pedestrian movement and clear, safe routes between the development and Princesshay, the High Street and Sidwell Street will ensure safe, easy access on foot for all.
- 4.7 Existing cycle parking at Princesshay demonstrates that there is high demand for cycling with the stands often full and the County Council is progressing ambitious plans to enhance cycle routes into the city centre to significantly increase cycling numbers. The County Council notes the commitment to provide stands in numbers pro rata to the number provided for Princesshay +25%. This is an area that can be agreed but can be covered via a legal agreement.
- 4.8 There are still details on cycle access on both Paris Street and Summerland Street to be resolved as these are existing routes into the city centre and need to continue to offer safe and convenient access for cyclists. The County Council believes there is a workable solution and that in isolation these detailed points would not be sufficient reason to recommend refusal.

Bus access arrangements

- 4.9 Buses carry a significant number of people into the city centre. The proposals to close Paris Street to through traffic has implications for cross city bus routes and the Park and Ride services from Honiton Road and Sowton.
- 4.10 Proposals to enable bus movements to/from New North Road from Sidwell Street is a positive solution as it removes buses from making the difficult manoeuvre between Longbrook Street and York Road, which can cause congestion problems.
- 4.11 Furthermore, making Cheeke Street a bus only section between Sidwell Street and Belgrave Road will ensure that convenient bus access to the main routes (Heavitree Road and New North Road via Sidwell Street) is achieved through the development.
- 4.12 The County Council is keen to retain the Honiton Road and Sowton Park and Ride services with good access to the City Centre. The proposed location of the bus stops adjacent to the new development are likely to be the optimum location, taking into account the developer's intentions to make the northern section of Paris Street free from all traffic. There is further work needed to determine exactly how the Park & Ride buses will U-turn under the proposed arrangement. This is a further area where officers are working with the applicant to determine an acceptable solution.

Bus and Coach Station

- 4.13 The existing bus station is in need of refurbishment. The new bus station will be modern and will be a higher quality offer for people. The bus station is well integrated with the retail and leisure development proposals. The access to/from the main bus corridors is convenient and the station pedestrian entrance acts as a gateway into the development. Through pre-application discussions, the County Council worked with the applicants and Stagecoach to ensure that the challenging topography of the site could achieve an accessible design with level onward pedestrian access into the city centre. This was considered critical for the high proportion of elderly passengers who travel into the city, some of whom may be mobility impaired.
- 4.14 Furthermore, working closely with Stagecoach, it was recognised that the existing bus station could operate more efficiently in terms of stand allocation. A detailed assessment of timetabling was carried out and concluded that the minimum number of stands required to operate the bus station would be 12 stands and 5 layover bays. The applicants have since increased the total to 12 stands with 6 layover bays and 2 additional on street bays on Bampfylde Street (see Appendix III).
- 4.15 In terms of future proofing the bus station, there is potential for dynamic stand allocation to maximise the efficiency of the operation of the bus station. There is also scope for some bus services to be shifted onto Sidwell Street or other nearby roads. Based on observations, many passengers choose to alight from the bus at an earlier stop as it is quicker to access the city centre than wait to get to the bus station.
- 4.16 The County Council recognises that bus station facilities (waiting rooms, information, toilets etc) are essential for people who may need to wait for long periods of time. In this respect, passengers on less frequent bus services or long distance coaches may expect to have their bus service accommodated in the bus station, particularly if they are infrequent travellers and are unfamiliar with the city they are visiting. In contrast, there is arguably less need for passenger facilities for people travelling on higher frequency services, which have similar frequencies to city bus services. As these local services require their own stand, there may be scope to move some of these buses on street and relieve capacity in the bus station. The applicants have identified additional bus stops on Sidwell Street, which could be used.
- 4.17 In summary, the proposed stands, layover bays and additional on-street stops in combination are considered sufficient to accommodate current and future services. The specifics about which services may operate from within the bus station or on-street is a detailed matter, which can be dealt with at the more detailed stage of the project or dynamically as the scheme settles down. It is recommended that conditions are applied whereby the LPA, in consultation with the local highway authority, approve a minimum site area for the bus and coach station and seek to agree the management arrangements, including details of on-street stops and layover facilities.
- 4.18 Touring coach proposals for two new bays on South Street, with parking at Haven Banks is considered a suitable solution as it offers convenient access to the Quay and Cathedral.

Road Network Impacts

- 4.19 It is recognised that the current road network suffers from congestion during busy periods and particularly at peak times. There will be additional traffic transferred from Paris Street onto alternative routes, therefore a number of changes to the network are proposed by the applicants (see Appendix II).
- 4.20 From Paris Street Roundabout, a form of gyratory is proposed with northbound traffic using Cheeke Street and Belgrave Road and all southbound traffic being directed along Summerland Street to Western Way (unless accessing the NCP car park via Belgrave Road). Additional capacity can be built into Summerland Street/Western Way signals by removing the left turn from Western Way. This will help accommodate southbound traffic that previously split between using the signals and routeing via Belgrave Road.
- 4.21 The latest proposals for Belgrave Road improve upon previous plans by including 12 echelon, short-stay parking spaces for the Royal Mail collection office. With the width of Belgrave Road, a dedicated lane is also provided for access to the NCP car park which also functions as a manoeuvring lane for vehicles parking in spaces.
- 4.23 With increased traffic on the approach from Summerland Street towards York Road, the signalised junction where the routes meet Sidwell Street becomes the critical junction on the network. The modelling work carried out by the applicants indicates that this junction will operate at capacity during the weekday peak hours. On occasions queues will occur at this junction, as happens elsewhere on the network. It should be noted that this is based on robust traffic figures and an assumption that a high proportion of traffic switches to Summerland Street. In reality traffic may disperse more widely across the network. Summerland Street itself is of sufficient width and geometry to accommodate additional traffic.
- 4.24 North of the junction, the cross city traffic is routed onto King William Street. As King William Street primarily functions as an access to the multi-storey car parks and servicing for the rear of Sidwell Street businesses, it is considered a preferable route for directing through traffic, rather than along York Road, which passes a primary school. Dedicated lanes are provided on King William Street to accommodate the increased traffic and arrangements are considered sensible. The impacts of this will be a 30% reduction of traffic passing the school on York Road.
- 4.25 The junction of King William Street and Longbrook Street is currently a simple give way arrangement which will suffer from congestion. The applicant has proposed signalling this junction and further review is being undertaken to ascertain if this acceptable. Notwithstanding this, considering the traffic flows across all of the arms and available road space, it is believed that an acceptable solution can be achieved.
- 4.26 Further refinement of the highway proposals will follow as the proposals will need to be subject to the road safety audit process. Discussions will continue between officers and the applicants. As already states the network currently suffers from congestion, the analysis has progressed sufficiently to provide confidence that the proposed highway amendments will not result in the residual cumulative impacts being sufficiently severe to warrant a recommendation of refusal.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 It is considered that the proposal will result in traffic and transportation improvements including:
- The opportunities for sustainable transport will improve, the bus station will be modernised and will be a higher quality offer for people.
 - Bus services will continue to have convenient, direct access to an expanding city centre.
 - There will be improved cycle and pedestrian facilities.
 - Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people.
 - There will be a substantial improvement for the safety of the high volume of pedestrians crossing Paris Street.
 - The directing traffic via King William Street will ensure that traffic flows are reduced past the school on York Road.
- 5.2 The proposal will result in adverse impacts on the highway network as there will be increased traffic, particularly at the York Road/Summerland Street junction which will suffer from congestion during busy periods and particularly at peak times. However, in the context of the city the level of congestion would not be considered to be severe.
- 5.3 The late receipt of information means that there are a number of minor matters that still need working through with the applicant team; however, the County Council is confident that these matters can be resolved. Given this it is considered appropriate that the detailed wording of the terms of the Legal Agreement and planning conditions (as set out in Appendix IV) are delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation.
- 5.4 In conclusion, although the proposals will be less convenient for drivers, it is considered that the city centre will be a significantly improved environment for visitors to the city; the cumulative impacts are not severe; any adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated; and therefore the response to Exeter City Council is made in accordance with the recommendation to this Report.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Divisions: All in Exeter

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Jamie Hlland

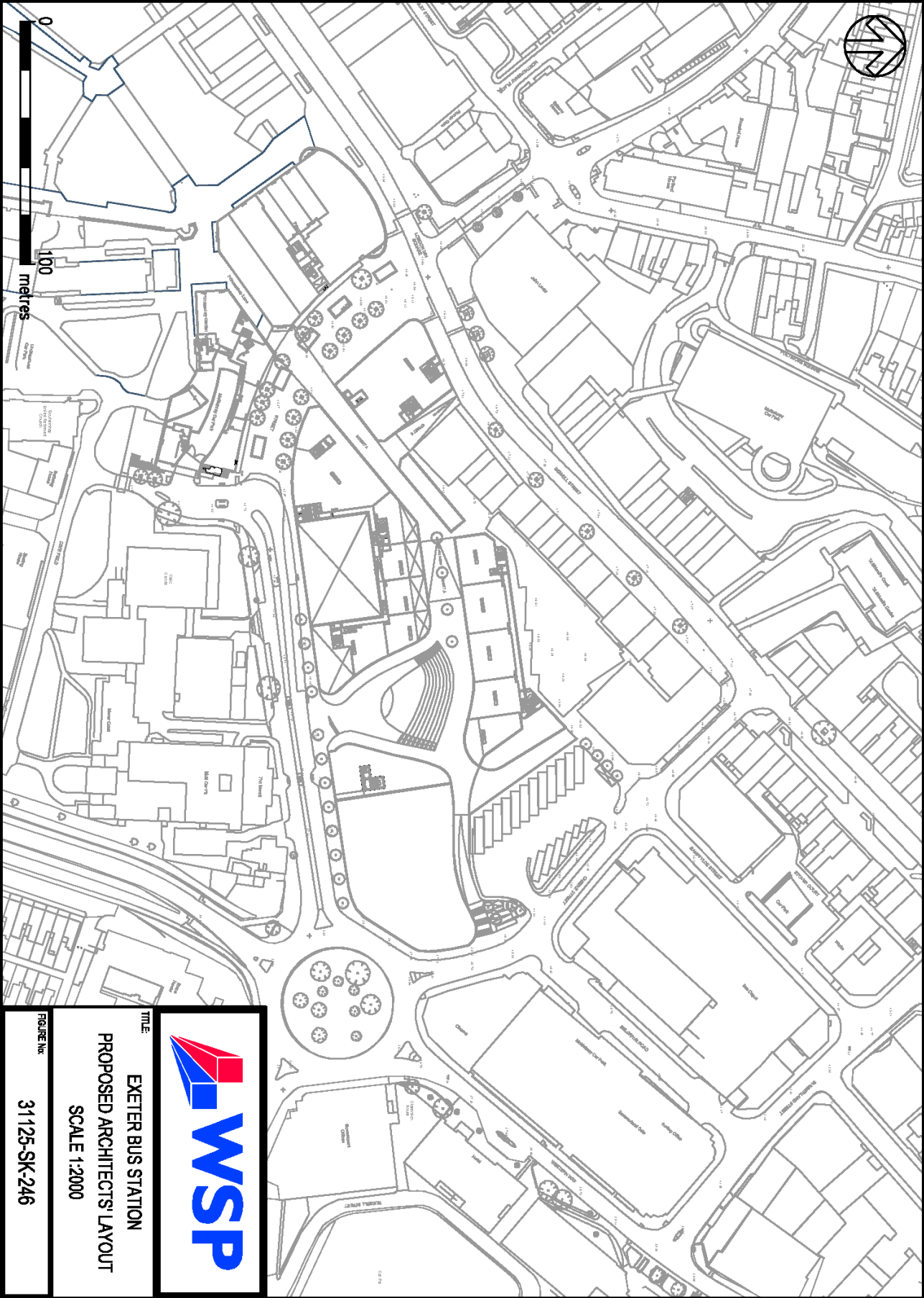
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Tel No: 01392 383000

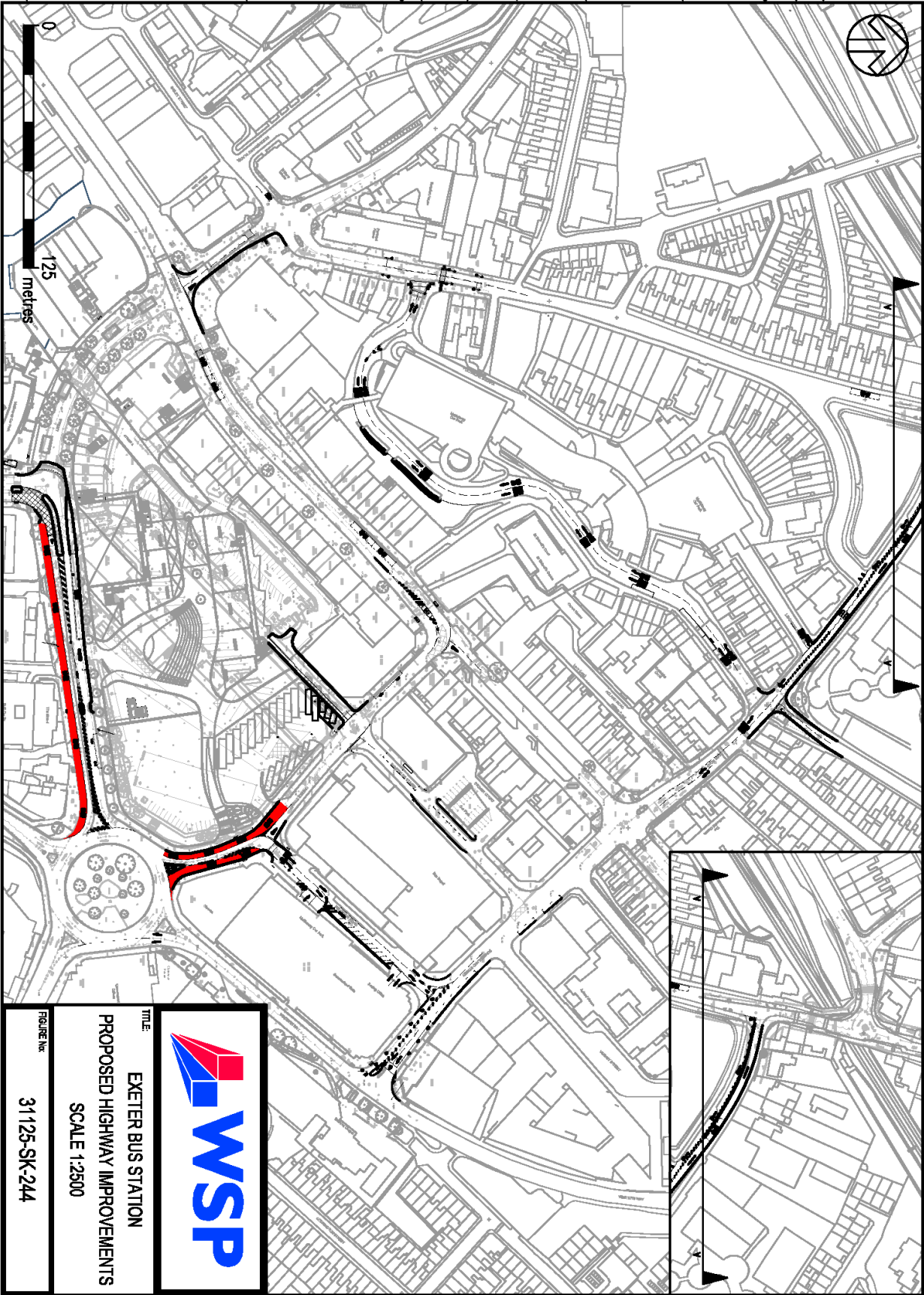
Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
Casework File	Current	15/0791/01


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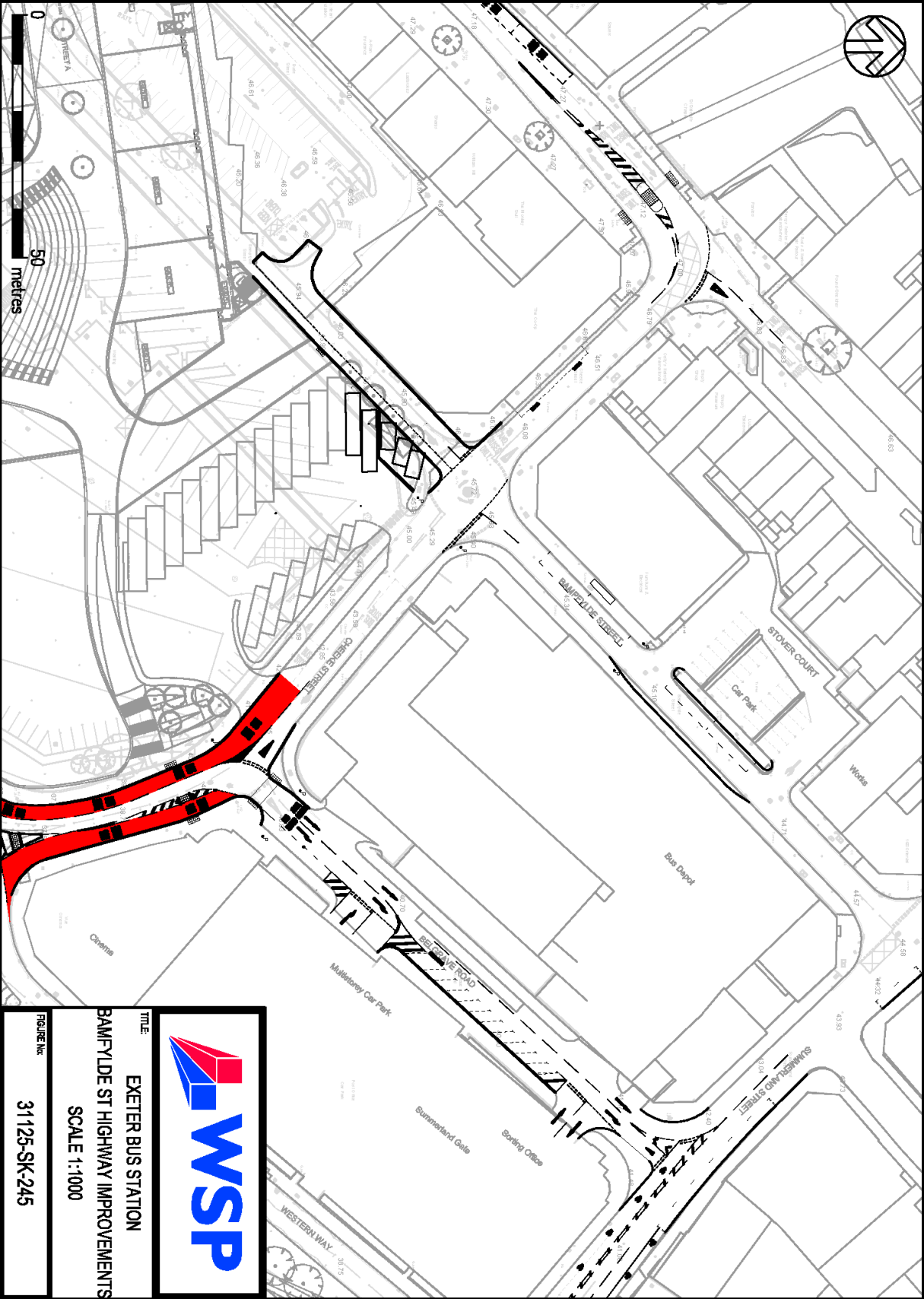
Appendix I
To PTE/15/66





TITLE EXETER BUS STATION PROPOSED ARCHITECTS' LAYOUT
SCALE 1:2000
FIGURE NO. 31125-SK-246




TITLE:
EXETER BUS STATION
PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS
SCALE 1:2500
FIGURE NO:
31125-SK-244



	TITLE
	EXETER BUS STATION
	BAMFYLDE ST HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS
SCALE 1:1000	
FIGURE NO.	
31125-SK-245	

Appendix IV To PTE/15/66

Draft Legal Agreement heads of terms/planning conditions

- A minimum site area for the replacement bus and coach station, to accommodate bays (including layover bays) and circulation/turning area.
- LPA to approve the detailed specification for the bus and coach station.
- LPA to approve circulation arrangements on the highway network for buses and coaches.
- LPA to approve management arrangements for the bus and coach station, as well as on-street stops and layover facilities.
- LPA to approve details of all changes to highway network including:
 - Road closures;
 - Traffic circulation including one-way working;
 - Layover bays.
- Bus stops with shelters and real time information for services not accommodated in bus station; and signed walking routes to and from these stops.
- Cycle routes with directional and regulatory signage (including fully signed route to replace existing route via Bampfylde Street).
- Securing routes through the site for pedestrians.
- Cycle parking within and around the site, and access for cyclists.
- Phasing to ensure that:
 - the construction of the new bus station is secured by letting of a contract before the current one is taken out of use;
 - the temporary arrangements are needed for as short a time as feasible.
- LPA to approve arrangements during the construction period, for:
 - circulation, stopping and layover arrangements;
 - waiting facilities with protection from the weather and information for passengers.