

TECHNICAL NOTE ADDENDUM – TRANSPORT PLANNING

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT

‘THE FIRS’ HOTEL, BEDFORD ROAD, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE

[NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE REF: 26/00393/FP]

Introduction

Highway Access Solutions [HAS] previously issued a Transport Technical Note in relation to the above development proposal on 9th February 2026. ‘Revision B’ of the Technical Note was subsequently issued by the Local Planning Authority [LPA] and the project team in support of the proposal. This Technical Note Addendum follows on from that report, and is intended to respond to comments subsequently received from the relevant authorities (as detailed below)

On 27th April 2026, the Project team received an email from the LPA detailing comments issued to them by the Local Highway Authority [LHA]. For the ease-of-reference, these are reproduced in full below:

RECOMMENDATION

Notice is given under Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

There is insufficient information accompanying this application to enable the Highway Authority to provide an informed recommendation. In the absence of the required details, the Highway Authority must therefore recommend refusal, due to uncertainty regarding the potential implications for highway safety and convenience.

Drawing Ref. HAS/25-023/07 Rev B illustrates Firs Close, including a section of footway located on highway land and associated reprofiling works. These matters, along with the proposed access from Firs Close, require further discussion. I would be pleased to meet either via Microsoft Teams or on site to review these points.

Drawing Ref. HAS/25-023/10 Rev B presents a swept path analysis for a recycling vehicle with a stated length of 11.2m. This should instead reflect the correct vehicle dimensions of 12.205m x 2.89m for a Mercedes Econic model, with the swept path conforming to the standard 12.1m x 2.5m envelope.

The Highway Authority also requests the inclusion of a pedestrian crossing within Firs Close, adjacent to No. 7, to facilitate pedestrian access from the development to Bedford Road and, ultimately, the town centre. This is likely to represent the primary pedestrian desire line.

For the reasons outlined above, the Highway Authority is unable to support the application at this time and therefore recommends that planning permission be refused.

Notwithstanding that the above comments notionally recommend refusal, HAS and the project team expressly noted that they offered to discuss matters further. On this basis, representatives of HAS and the LHA convened a call on 29th April 2026 to discuss matters.

This Addendum summarises the discussions which occurred during that meeting, and details proposed alterations to the submitted scheme. These have been provisionally agreed with the LHA. Based on the proposed updates, it is the understanding of HAS that the LHA will likely be willing to withdraw their objection.

Discussion Point – Refuse Access

As noted by the LHA, the initial HAS submission included a swept path assessment for an 11.2m Refuse Collection Vehicle [RCV]. Prior to preparing this assessment, we first referred to 'The Place and Movement Planning Design Guidance for Hertfordshire' (adopted March 2024) to establish whether the LHA had recently published any advice as to the vehicle profile that should be used for swept path assessment purposes. Whilst this guidance refers to the need for suitable swept path assessment, no vehicle profiles for local RCVs are currently included. Absent this information, HAS prepared our assessment utilising the vehicle profile of a typical modern 4-axle RCV.

Based on the comments received from the LHA, we understand that they have a 'standard 12.1m x 2.5m envelope' which they typically use for RCV tracking (this seemingly very slightly smaller than the Mercedes 'Econic' RCV currently utilised in North Hertfordshire).

Notwithstanding the size of the RCV to be considered, the subsequent discussion between HAS representative and the LHA Officer quickly established the following:

- that, whilst the vehicle assessed by HAS is slightly shorter in length, its overall manoeuvring characteristics are likely similar to the Mercedes 'Econic';
- that the swept path assessment shown on **Drawing Number HAS/25-023/07B** assumed demolition of the Firs Hotel and reliance upon the driveway within the site to accommodate the rear bodywork overhang of an RCV;
- that, with the existing Firs Hotel in place, the turning area currently available at Firs Close is significantly more constrained than shown on **Drawing /07B** (given that the southern wall of the hotel immediately abuts the turning area);
- therefore, that (unless the driver is permitted to overrun local footways), it does not currently appear possible for a Mercedes 'Econic' to enter Firs Close in forward gear, turn around with the cul-de-sac and exit in forward gear; and lastly that,
- notwithstanding the above, it is currently necessary for an RCV to service Firs Close (most likely by the RCV making a controlled, banksperson-supervised reversing manoeuvre from the A600).

Further to the above, it was also established that:

- the existing layout of Firs Close limits the scope for significant alterations, which could not reasonably be delivered by the Applicant;
- that the provision of direct access between the development site and Firs Close (consistent with previous LPA pre-application advice) does provide betterment to the existing turning area;
- that the collection of additional refuse containers associated with the proposed development would not actually increase the number of RCV manoeuvres to-and-from Firs Close;
- that therefore, as compared with the existing situation at Firs Close, the proposed development would not give rise to any detrimental impact on the public highway network in relation to refuse collection; and thus,
- that (subject to addressing the pedestrian safety matters detailed below), the objection regarding RCV access to the site can likely be withdrawn by the LHA.

Discussion Point – Pedestrian Safety

In considering matters of pedestrian safety, HAS initially considered the provision of a new crossing point outside Number 7 Firs Close, as initially suggested by the LHA. This would, logically, need to connect to the footway outside Number 3 Firs Close. Notionally, such a crossing point would improve pedestrian facilities along the existing desire line between the A600 and the main section of Firs Close.

During the call with the LHA, the possibility of such a crossing was discussed further, but ultimately found to be unsatisfactory by both parties. Any such crossing point would essentially overlap the dropped kerbs serving the driveways to both Numbers 3 and 7, would be poorly defined and would necessarily lack tactile paving. As such, it would offer no clear benefit and would continue to encourage pedestrians to cross the cul-de-sac, in an area where they may come into conflict with reversing vehicles.

HAS acknowledge that the proposed development would likely result in modest increases to both pedestrian and vehicle movement at Firs Close. On the above basis, it was agreed that it would be far preferable to provide a new footway on the northern side of Firs Close. This idea had initially been considered but abandoned owing to the risk of adversely impacting two existing street trees on the highway verge between Firs Close and the existing Firs Hotel.

Notwithstanding the previous concerns, by agreeing on appropriate compromises internally and with the LHA, the project team have now prepared an initial proposal for a new footway based on the following assumptions:

- that the width of the footway can be limited to 1.8m (as opposed to 2.0m) so as to avoid the footway passing unacceptably close to the trees;
- that an appropriate refuse collection point would be located adjacent to the Firs Close entrance to the site (minimising any obstruction on the footway on refuse / recycling collection dates)
- that the alignment of the frontage garden walls at the A600 can be modified to allow the new footway to 'tie-in' appropriately to existing facilities; and,
- that a suitable Arboricultural Method Statement can be prepared so as to minimise any impact of the footway construction on the nearby trees.

This Addendum therefore includes a revised copy of the following Drawings, all showing the footway now proposed by the project team and as provisionally agreed with the LHA. The revised Drawing Numbers are as follows:

- **HAS/25-023/06D** – showing the Proposed Development overview;
- **HAS/25-023/07D** – showing the Proposed Development (with land transfers and key dimensions);
- **HAS/25-023/08D** – showing the Proposed Development (showing a clearance underlay); and,
- **HAS/25-023/09D** – showing the Proposed Development (with key Root Protection Areas and indicative planting).

It should be stressed that, in addition to serving the proposed development itself, the proposed footway would provide significant betterment to the existing pedestrian facilities at Firs Close. Crucially, it would also reduce the risk of pedestrians coming into conflict with RCVs when these are required to complete necessary manoeuvres at Firs Close.

Noting the above, HAS are satisfied that the proposal for a new footway at Firs Close can reasonably be stated to provide localised betterment to the public highway and public realm. We understand that the LHA are supportive of this, and that it is unlikely to cause significant harm to the existing street trees located between the site and Firs Close itself.

Closing Remarks

This Addendum has detailed the discussions between HAS and the LHA in relation to the latter's possible concerns about the proposed redevelopment of the Firs Hotel site to provide 9 new homes.

Based on those discussions, it is understood that earlier concerns about refuse collection can likely be withdrawn. Additionally, the project team are pleased to offer the provision of a new footway at Firs Close, which should benefit both the future residents of the site and existing residents of Firs Close itself.

As previously noted, Paragraph 116 of the current NPPF explicitly states that a Highways-related recommendation for refusal can only be made where a proposal would give rise to severe detrimental impacts on the capacity or the public highway network or unacceptable safety impacts.

Whilst HAS understands that the LHA are supportive of the newly proposed footway, and that this will address their concerns, we now invite the LPA to formally consult them to confirm this position. Should any Officers require any additional information, HAS and our Client would be pleased to discuss matters by telephone, email and/or arrange a further meeting as appropriate.

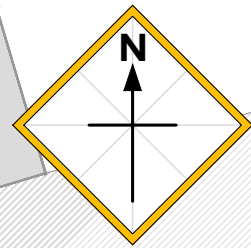
Addendum prepared by:

Andrew Dennison
BEng (Hons) MSc MCIHT MTPS
Founder
Highway Access Solutions

29th May 2026

REVISED DRAWINGS
HAS/25-023/06D THRU /09D

DRAWING #: HAS/25-023/06
REV: D



VERTICAL CYCLE
LOCKERS TO BE
PROVIDED
(EXAMPLE)

REAR GATES TO
BE CREATED TO
UNION PATH
(EXAMPLE)

SERVICING / TRADE /
DELIVERY PARKING BAY

RAISED / TEXTURED
ENTRY FEATURE

FORMALISED SPLIT
IN EXISTING FOOTWAY
CROSSOVERS (WITH
ADDITIONAL TACTILE
PAVING)

RETAINED / EXISTING
RIGHT-TURN LANE

REVISED RADII WITH
REPLACEMENT
TACTILE PAVING

EXISTING
FOOTWAY
WIDENED

EXISTING STREET
TREES RETAINED

REFUSE STORE FOR
FRONTAGE PROPERTIES

EXTENSION TO
FIRS CLOSE WITH NEW
CROSSING POINT

REVISED KERBLINE
WITH NEW FOOTWAY

1:250 @ A3

- DRAWING BASED ON TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY
- SURVEY SUPPLEMENTED BY COMMERCIAL OS MAPPING, MODIFIED BASED ON DIGITAL / SITE OBSERVATIONS
- HAS CANNOT GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THIRD-PARTY MAPPING
- ALL ROAD MARKINGS AND VEGETATION ARE INDICATIVE ONLY
- SITE LAYOUT AS DEVELOPED WITH CAPITAL DEVELOPMENTS LTD AND SEABROOK ARCHITECTS

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HAS

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CLIENT:

Capital Developments Group Ltd

DRAWING TITLE:

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
OVERVIEW (WITH
PARKING SPACE IDs)

PROJECT TITLE:

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL
REDEVELOPMENT,
'THE FIRS' HOTEL,
BEDFORD ROAD, HITCHIN

D	19/05/26	NEW F.C.L. FOOTWAY WITH 1.8m MIN WIDTH, MINOR CHANGE TO FRONTAGE @ PLOT #6	ACD	ACD
C	-	- UNISSUED -	ACD	ACD
B	09/02/26	REVISED FRONTAGE AT PLOT #9, PLUS MINOR AMENDMENTS	ACD	ACD
A	22/01/26	PATIOS & FRONTAGE WALLS REMOVED, DOORS UPDATED AND REVISED PLANTING	ACD	ACD
REV.	DATE	ALTERATION(S) MADE	P/BY	C/BY

DRAWING #:
HAS/25-023/06

REV:
D

DATE:
22/12/2025

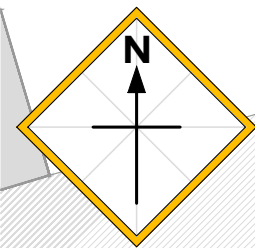
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ACD

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ACD

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DRAWING #: HAS/25-023/07
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**FORMALISED SPLIT
IN EXISTING FOOTWAY
CROSSOVERS (WITH
ADDITIONAL TACTILE
PAVING)**

**REVISED RADII WITH
REPLACEMENT
TACTILE PAVING**

**EXISTING
FOOTWAY
WIDENED**

**BLUE-HATCHED LAND
TRANSFERRED TO #9**

**MAGENTA-HATCHED
EXTENSION TO FIRS CLOSE
(WITH CROSSING POINT)
TO BE OFFERED FOR ADOPTION**

**REVISED KERBLINE
WITH NEW FOOTWAY**

**NEW FOOTWAY LIMITED
TO 1.8m WIDTH CLOSE
TO HIGHWAY TREES**

1:250 @ A3

- DRAWING BASED ON TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY
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DRAWING TITLE:
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OVERVIEW (WITH LAND
TRANSFERS & DIMENSIONS)**

PROJECT TITLE:
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REDEVELOPMENT,
'THE FIRS' HOTEL,
BEDFORD ROAD, HITCHIN**

D	05/05/26	F.C.L. FOOTWAY NOW 1.8m MIN WIDTH, MINOR CHANGE TO FRONTAGE @ PLOT #6	ACD	ACD
C	01/05/26	NEW FOOTWAY AT FIRS CLOSE PROPOSED	ACD	ACD
B	09/02/26	REVISED FRONTAGE AT PLOT #9, PLUS MINOR AMENDMENTS	ACD	ACD
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DATE:
22/12/2025

REV:
D

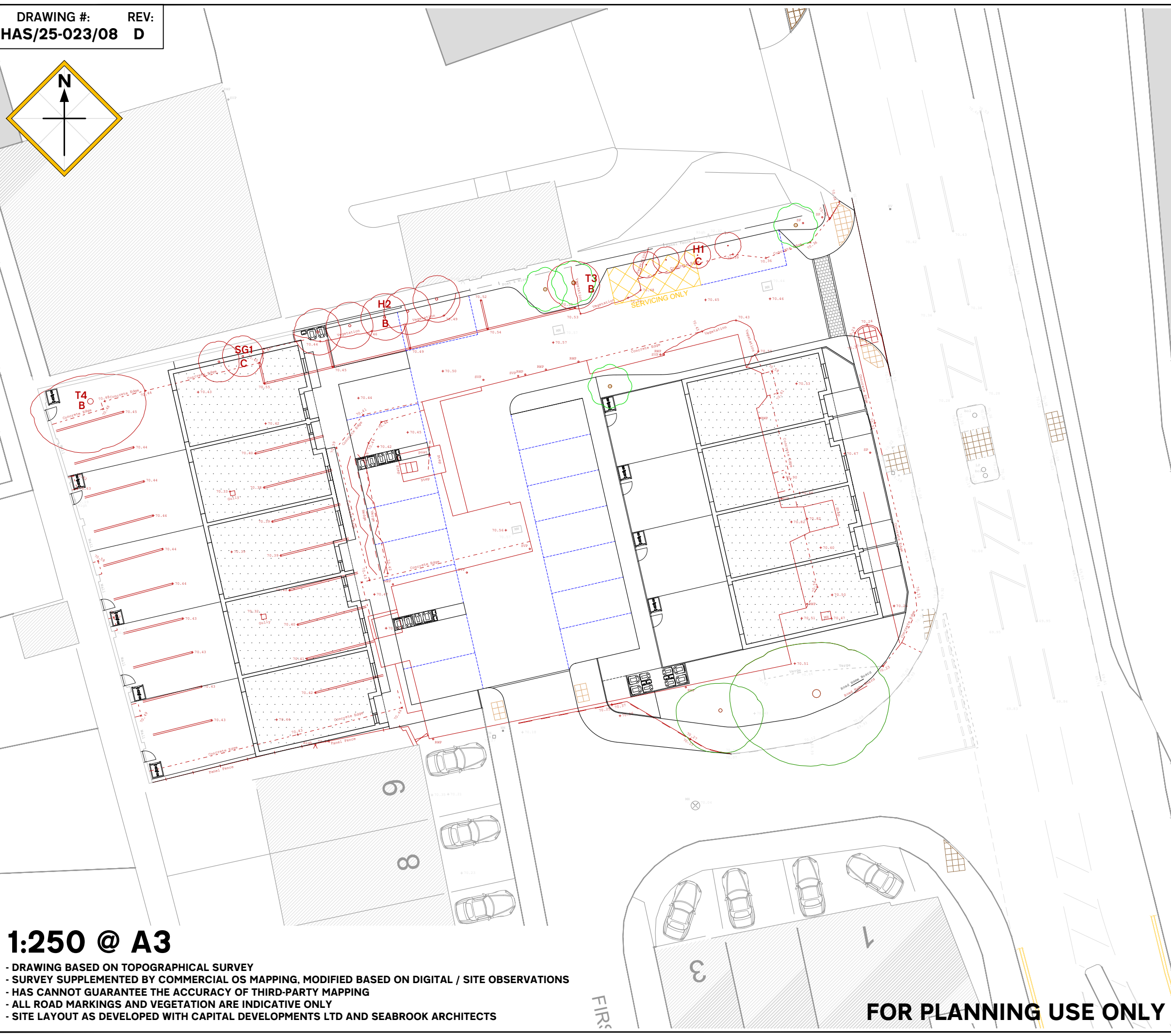
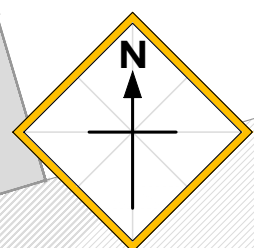
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1:250 @ A3

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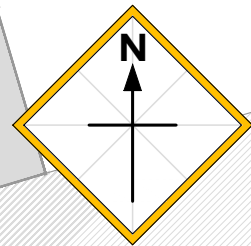
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REV.	DATE	ALTERATION(S) MADE	P/BY	C/BY

DRAWING #: HAS/25-023/08
REV: D
DATE: 22/12/2025
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DRAWING #: HAS/25-023/09
REV: D



LOW-LEVEL (<600mm)
PLANTING BETWEEN
PARKING BAYS

NEW / REPLACEMENT
TREES

NEW
TREES

ALL PLANTING
ACROSS SITE
FRONTAGE TO BE
<600m IN HEIGHT

SERVICING ONLY

EXISTING STREET TREES
RETAINED [SEE DETAILS IN
ARBORICULTURE REPORT]

1:250 @ A3

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PREPARED BY: ACD
CHECKED BY: ACD

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