

R498 ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECT AT CASTLEMEADOWS, THURLES

P22-089 – PART 8 REPORT

Prepared for: Tipperary County Council



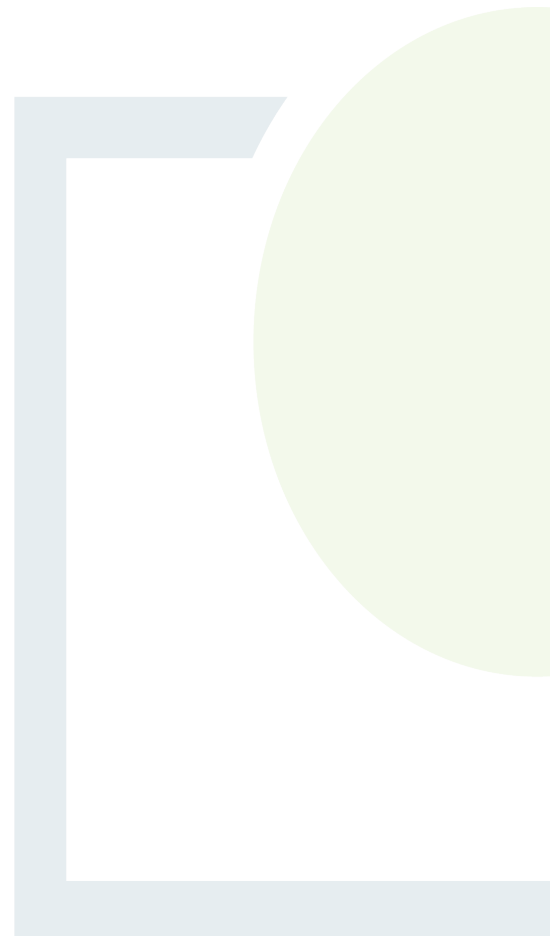
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P22-089 – PART 8 REPORT

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Abstract: This Part 8 Report has been prepared in consideration of a proposed active travel scheme along on the R498 between the roundabout at the entrance to the Technology University of the Shannon and Bohernanave in Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tipperary County Council (TCC) have commissioned Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) to provide consultancy services to include option selection and preliminary design in relation to improvement works to the R498 (Castlemeadows) between the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout and Bohernanave, Thurles.

This Part 8 Report includes a description of the location of the project and sets out the nature, extent and principal features of the proposed scheme.

The scheme commences at the roundabout junction at the Technology University of the Shannon and extends to the junction of Bohernanave, a distance of approximately 0.35 km. A scheme location map is shown in Figure 1.1 below. The scheme is located on the R498 Regional Road and lies within the townlands of Thurles Townsparks and Racecourse. The project will include the installation of cycle and pedestrian infrastructure to improve active travel connectivity along the R498.

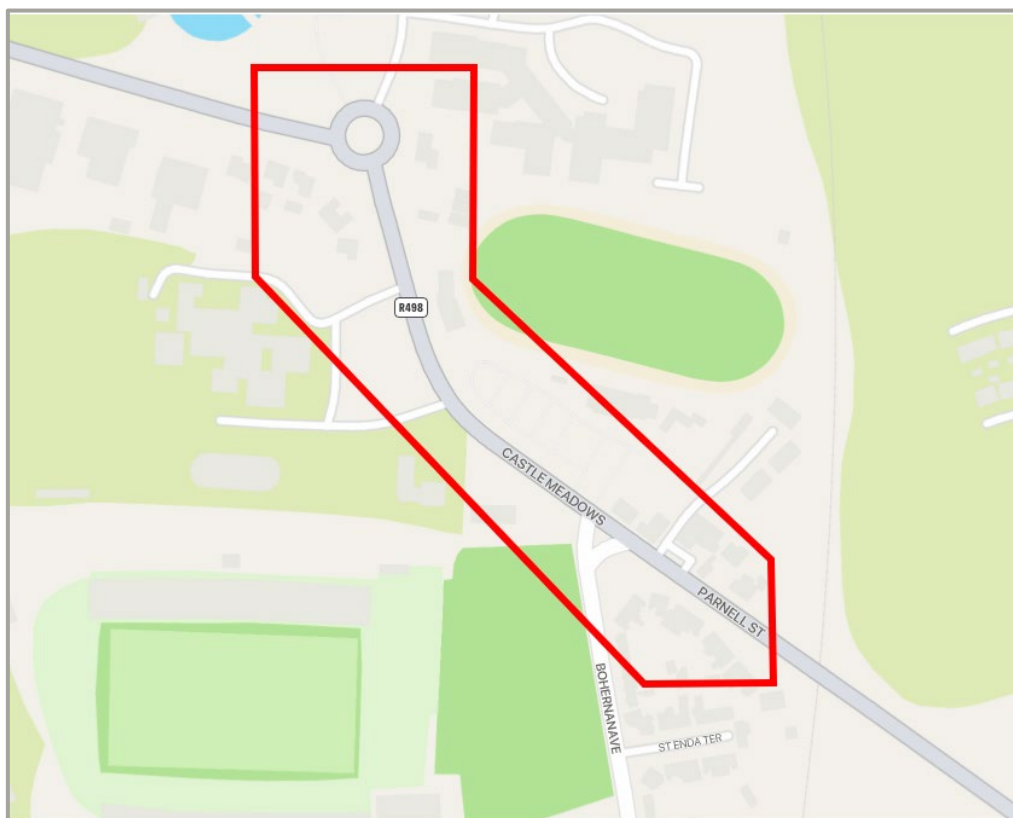


Figure 1.1: Scheme Location



2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Description of the Scheme

The proposed improvements along the R498 will comprise the following:

- The provision of 700m of 1.5m wide raised cycle tracks from the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout to the R498/Bohernanave Junction;
- Upgrading of the existing footpaths from the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout to the R498/Bohernanave Junction;
- Provision of minimum footpath widths of 1.8m;
- The provision of new bus set down area adjacent to Coláiste Mhuire;
- Improvement to entrances and accesses to businesses and residential properties;
- Reduction in the width of the R498 traffic lanes to 3.25m lanes to reduce vehicle speeds;
- Controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian and cyclist road crossings;
- Reduction in junction widths to reduce crossing times and distances; and
- All associated ancillary works.

The proposed scheme has been designed to current standards including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the National Cycle Manual (NCM).

2.2 Need for the Scheme

The 'Need for the Scheme' is defined by the identified deficiencies and safety issues of the existing road infrastructure.

In terms of identified deficiencies the existing section of the R498 under consideration presents significant infrastructural and safety deficiencies for pedestrians and cyclists, and are summarised below:

1. Existing Cyclist Facilities - The section of the R498 under consideration does not have dedicated facilities for cyclists.
2. Active Travel Route Connections - The existing network of active travel routes requires additional pathways and connections to create a more comprehensive network to encourage modal shift.
3. Existing Road Layout - There are a high number of direct accesses to the R498, particularly at Coláiste Mhuire and on the approach to the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout. Junction layouts, including pedestrian crossing facilities, are poor.
4. Coláiste Mhuire - The extent and condition of existing active travel infrastructure servicing Coláiste Mhuire is poor with no cycling infrastructure and gaps in the footpath provision.



With the existing infrastructural and safety deficiencies outlined above, the need for an improvement to the R498 between the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout and Bohernanave junction has been identified in order to meet the current and future demands on the route in a safe and efficient manner. The delivery of active travel infrastructure along this section of the R498 is key to the provision of a high-quality active travel network within Thurles which will enable the growth of sustainable and active travel alternatives to private vehicles.

2.3 Scheme Objectives

The purpose of these works is to provide a safe walking and cycling environment for local people. The objectives of the project can be summarised as follows:

- Provide continuous segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities along the R498;
- Provision of a bus set down area at Coláiste Mhuire;
- Improve pedestrian facilities to provide minimum footpath widths of 1.8m;
- Appropriate treatment of domestic and business entrances, including junction tightening where appropriate, along the R498;
- Provision of safe pedestrian and cyclist crossing points at the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout;
- Consideration of existing parking along the R498;
- Redesign of the existing R498/Bohernanave junction with due consideration of pedestrian and traffic flows on match days; and
- Provide connectivity to Semple Stadium and to existing active travel routes on Racecourse Road.

The scheme objectives are complimentary to the objectives of the Tipperary Walking and Cycling Strategy, which include:

- Improve walking and cycling facilities for short trips;
- Promote walking and cycling as the primary means of travel for shorter trips;
- Improve safety on roads for cycling;
- Facilitate walking and cycling access to public transport;
- Promote walking and cycling as the main forms of travel for education;
- Sustain and enhance local retail vitality and tourism;
- Provide improved facilities for recreational walking and cycling; and
- Promote behavioural change to more sustainable modes of travel other than the private car.



3. DESIGN DESCRIPTION

3.1 Existing Roadway Arrangement

The 0.35 km stretch of the R498 under consideration is a two-lane, two-way carriageway with a posted speed limit of 50 km/hr. The existing road cross section can loosely be broken into three sections. The northern section, approx. 120m in length, runs from the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout to Coláiste Mhuire. This section contains a 1.6m wide footpath along the north-eastern side of the road. Traffic lanes are a maximum 4.8m wide. Along the south-western side, a footpath of varying width is located adjacent to the road with a minimum width of 1.6m.

The central section runs from the northern driveway of Coláiste Mhuire to the northern entry point to Semples Stadium, a distance of approx. 100m. This section contains a 1.8m wide footpath along the north-eastern side of the road and a discontinuous footpath with a minimum width of 2.1m on the south-western side. The width of the southbound traffic lane varies from 4.3m to 4.9m and the width of the northbound traffic lane varies from 5.6m to 5.9m.

The southern section runs from the northern gate of Semples Stadium to Bohernanave Junction, a distance of approx. 130m. Both traffic lanes are 3.5m wide. The footpath along the northeast side is 1.8m wide. On the south-western side, the footpath is 2.5m wide adjacent to a 2.7m high wall.

3.2 Proposed Scheme

The proposed improvement works to the R498 in Thurles commence at the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout and extends to the Bohernanave junction with the R498. 1.50m wide raised cycle tracks will be constructed between the R498 carriageway and the existing footpaths along both sides of the R498. The cycle lanes will extend around the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout to connect with existing cycle lanes on Racecourse Road.

The existing road lanes will be narrowed to provide 3.25m wide traffic lanes in order to slow vehicle speeds and to provide additional width for the cyclist and pedestrian facilities. Junctions will be narrowed where excess width is currently provided by reducing the existing corner radii. Existing footpaths will be widened to provide a minimum width of 1.8m. Widening or moving of the footpath outside the Greyhound Stadium entrance will match the existing stone paving type in that area.

Part of the existing verge will be excavated to allow the construction of the proposed cycle and pedestrian facilities. The proposed cycle tracks will have an asphalt surface and the proposed footpaths will have a concrete surface finish. Proposed drainage will generally consist of moving existing gullies to the new kerb line and the provision of new gullies where required.

A new bus set down area will be constructed between the Coláiste Mhuire boundary wall and the R498. The bus set-down area will allow busses to enter adjacent to the existing Coláiste Mhuire entrance, drive one-way through the area and exit onto the existing Coláiste Mhuire exit. Parking is provided for two school busses.

The existing area in front of the Teagasc entrance will be separated from the Coláiste Mhuire entrance with a footpath and planted area. Car parking spaces for 5 vehicles will be provided immediately north of the entrance.



New controlled pedestrian crossing facilities are provided on Bohernanave, the exit from Coláiste Mhuire, the entry to the proposed bus set down area at Coláiste Mhuire and at each approach road to the Technology University of the Shannon Roundabout.

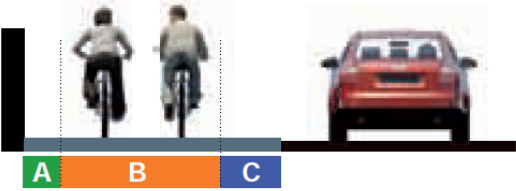
Areas of additional or altered landscaping will be provided outside the Teagasc entrance, adjacent to the entrance to the proposed bus set-down area and in areas bordering the roundabout carriageway.

The public lighting along the R498 is proposed to be broadly maintained with additional lighting provided where possible in areas where the current provision is inadequate. Where the proposed cycle tracks end at the scheme extents, advance warning signs will be provided to indicate an end to the dedicated cycling tracks.

Preliminary design drawings, including layout plans and a typical cross section, are contained in Appendix A.

3.3 Compliance with Design Standards

The width of cycle facilities was determined in accordance with the recommendations of the National Cycle Manual width calculator as shown in Figure 3.1:



A Inside Edge	B Cycling Regime	C Outside Edge	D Additional Features
Kerb 0.25m	Single File 0.75m	30kph, 3.0m wide lane 0.50m	Uphill 0.25m
Channel Gully 0.25m	Single File + Overtaking, Partially using next lane 1.25m	50kph, 3.0m wide lane 0.75m	Sharp bends 0.25m
Wall, Fence or Crash Barrier 0.65m	Basic Two-Way 1.75m	Raised kerb, dropped Kerb or physical barrier 0.50m	Cyclist stacking, Stopping and starting 0.50m
Poles or Bollards 0.50m	Single File + Overtaking, Partially using next lane 2.00m	Kerb to vegetation etc. (ie. cycleway) 0.25m	Around primary schools, Interchanges, or for larger tourist bikes 0.25m
	2 Abreast + overtaking (tracks and cycleways) 2.50m		Taxi ranks, loading, line of parked cars 1.00m (min 0.8m)
			Turning pocket cyclists 0.50m

Figure 3.1: National Cycle Manual Width Calculator



The typical cross section configuration for the improvement works provides a raised cycle track between the footpath and the traffic lanes. The width of the cycle track is therefore determined on the following basis:

Table 3-1: Cycle Track Width

Element	Condition	Min. Width
A - Inside Edge	-	0.00m
B - Cycling Regime	Single File	0.75m
C - Outside Edge	Raised Kerb	0.50m
D - Additional Features	-	0.00m
Minimum Width Required:		1.25m
Proposed Width:		1.50m

The width of the footpaths was determined by reference to DMURS Section 4.3.1. A minimum footpath width of 1.8m has been applied throughout the scheme.

3.4 Proposed Typical Cross Section

The typical section, as shown in Figure 3.2 below, shows reduced traffic lane widths of 3.25m which act to slow traffic. The available width along the R498 corridor varies and therefore the typical cross section below provides additional width for pedestrian infrastructure and verges where the space is available.

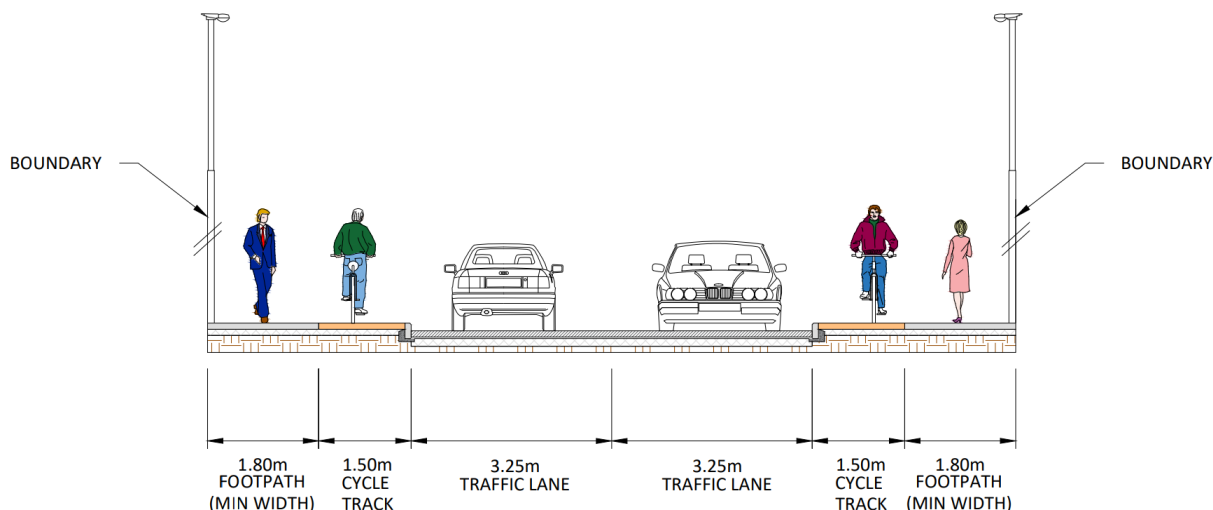


Figure 3.2: Typical Cross Section



4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED WORKS

4.1 Environmental Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Reports have been prepared by TCC and are contained in Appendices B and C respectively.

The scheme extents are not within any Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The nearest SAC is the Lower River Suir SAC, at a distance of over 1km from the scheme. There are no Natura 2000 sites within 1km of the project.

The AA and EIA Screening Reports conclude that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment and therefore Appropriate Assessment and/or an EIAR are not required.

4.2 Flood Risk Assessment

A preliminary flood risk assessment has been undertaken by reviewing information from the Office of Public Works (OPW) national flood information portal (www.floodinfo.ie). The fluvial flooding map is shown in Figure 4-1 below. The scheme extents are not subject fluvial (river) flooding with no fluvial flood catchment area in proximity to the site.

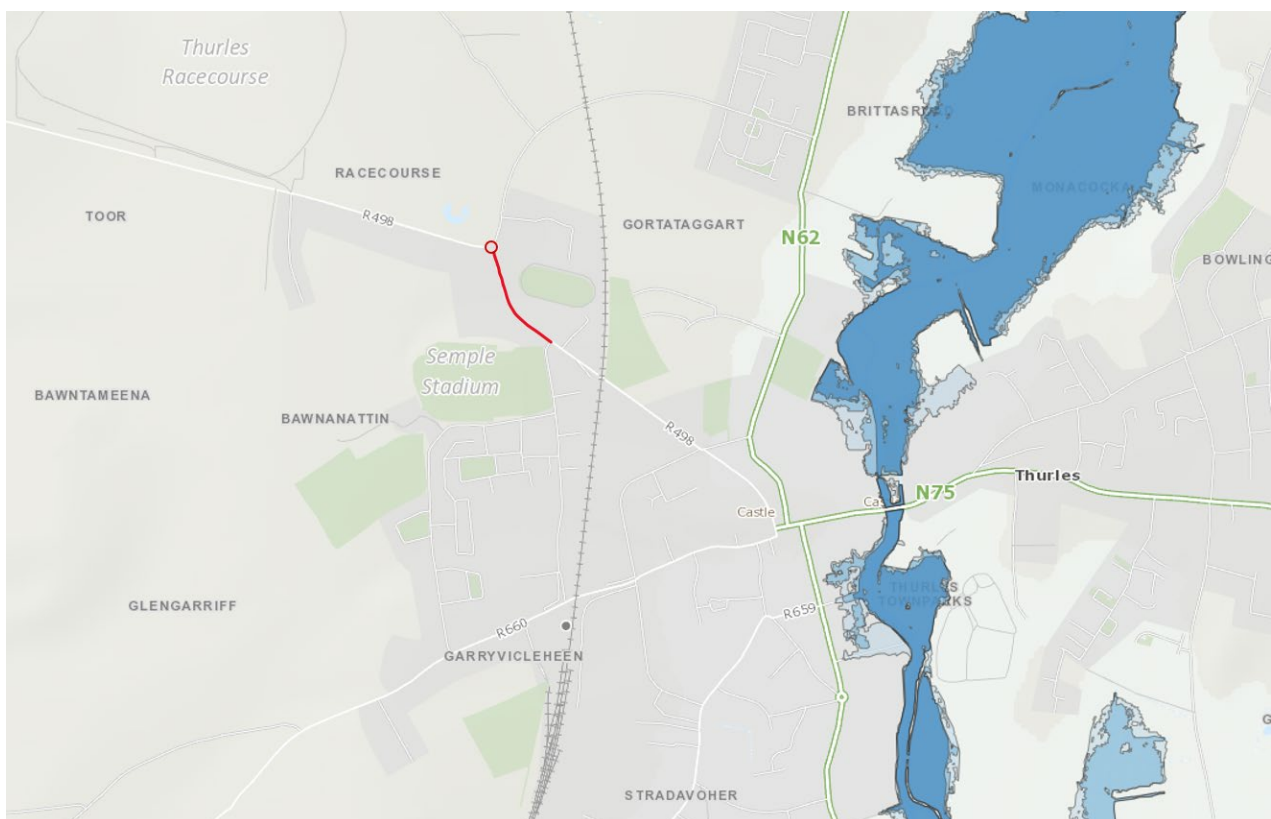


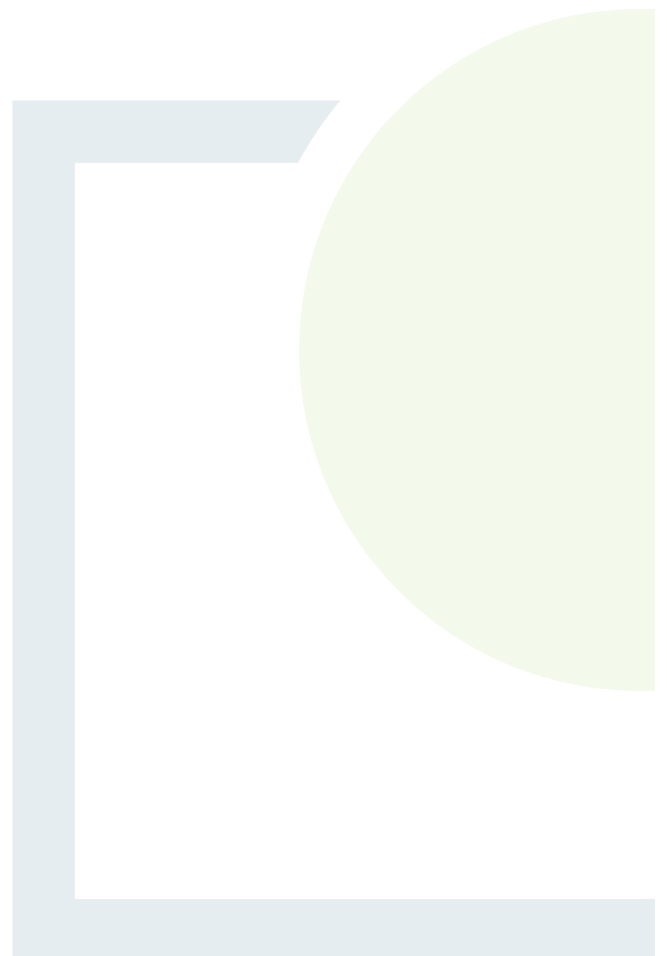
Figure 4.1: Fluvial Flooding Risk Assessment Map



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APPENDIX **A**

Preliminary Design Drawings





Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



R498 ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECT AT CASTLEMEADOWS, THURLES

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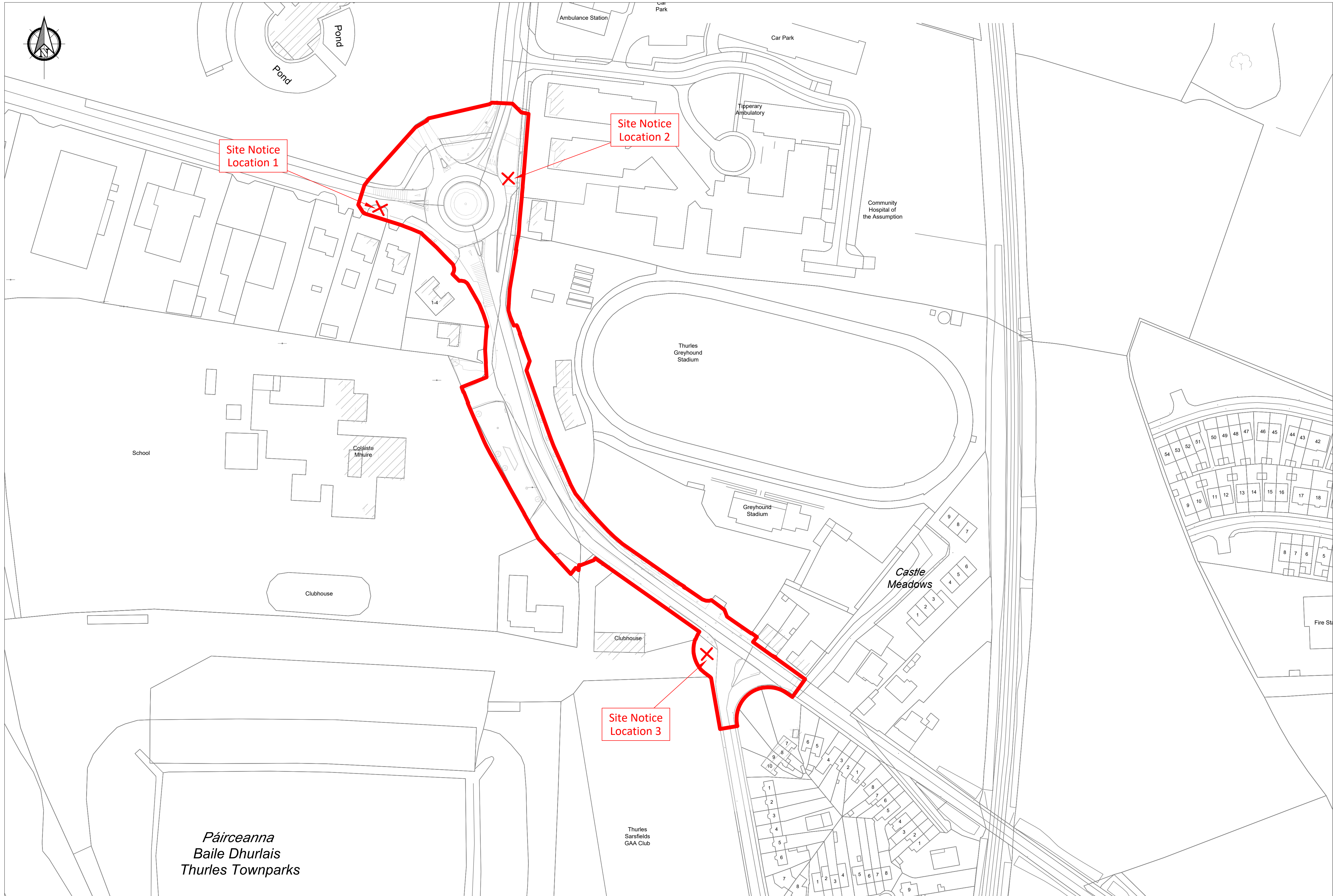
Drawing Index

Drawing Name	Drawing Number
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DRAWING INDEX	P22-089-0200-0002
SITE LOCATION PLAN	P22-089-0200-0003
TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS	P22-089-0200-0004
PLAN VIEW OF PRELIMINARY DESIGN - SHEET 1 OF 2	P22-089-0200-0005
PLAN VIEW OF PRELIMINARY DESIGN - SHEET 2 OF 2	P22-089-0200-0006

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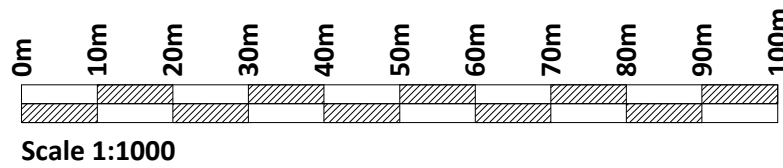
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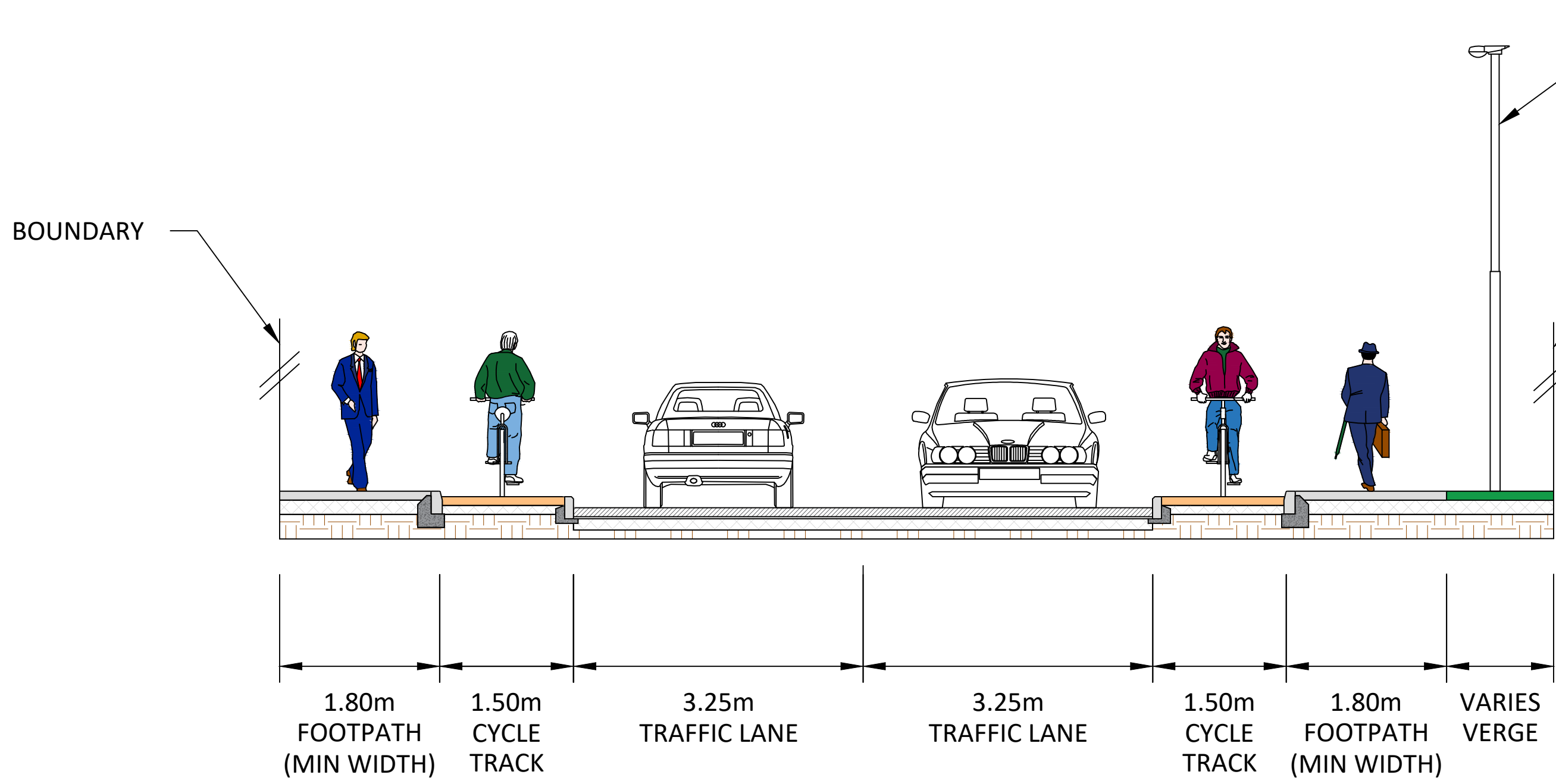
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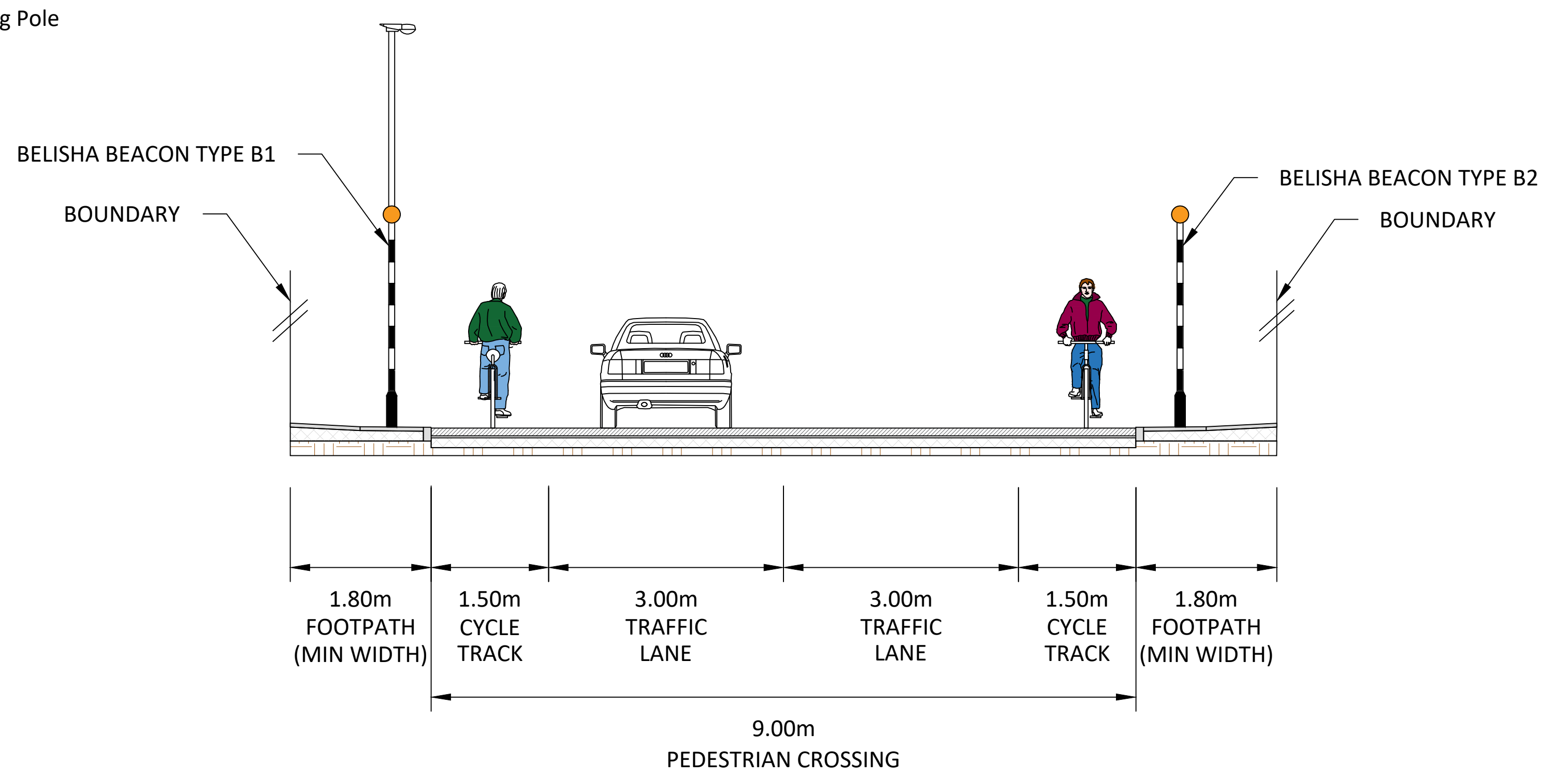


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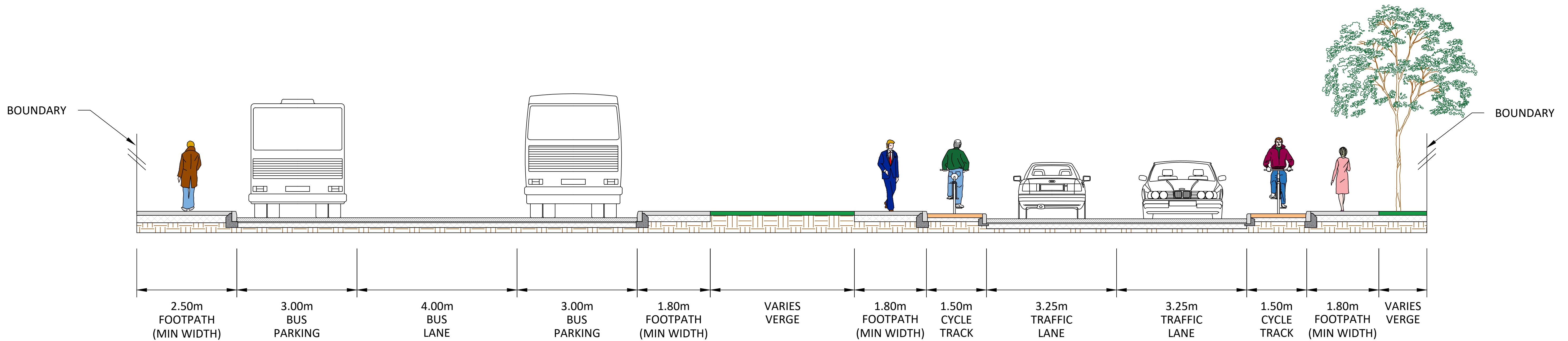
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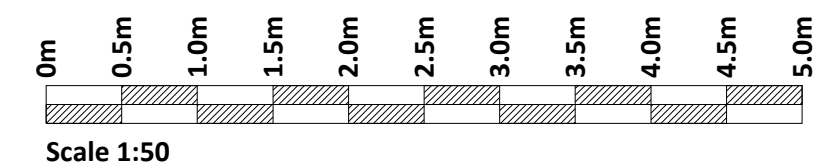
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TYPICAL CROSS SECTION C-C
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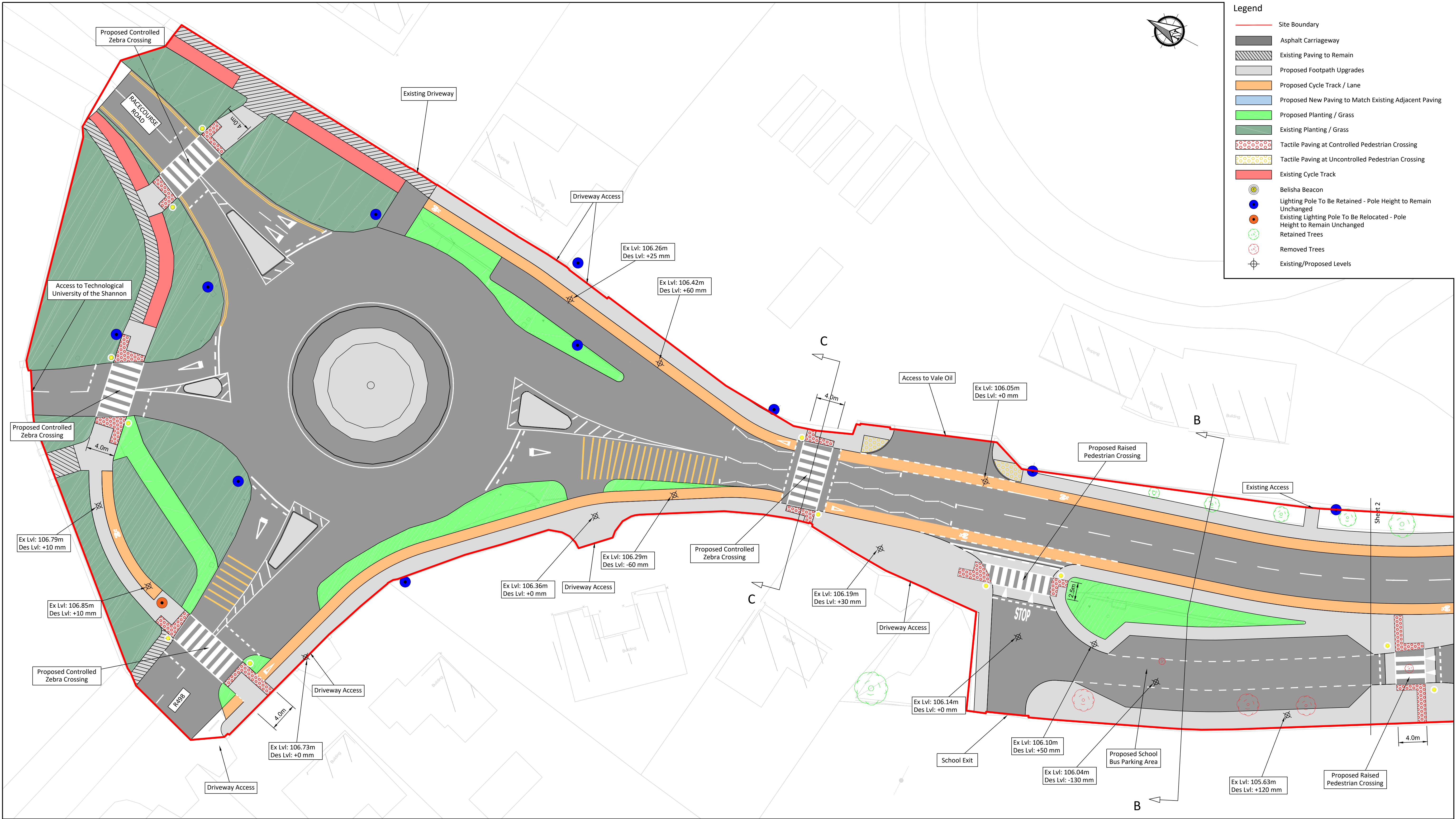


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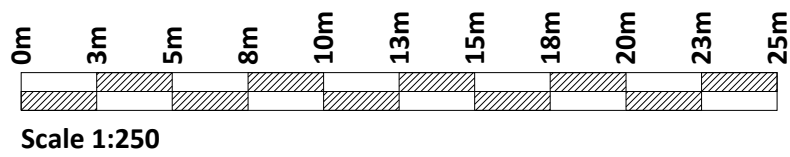


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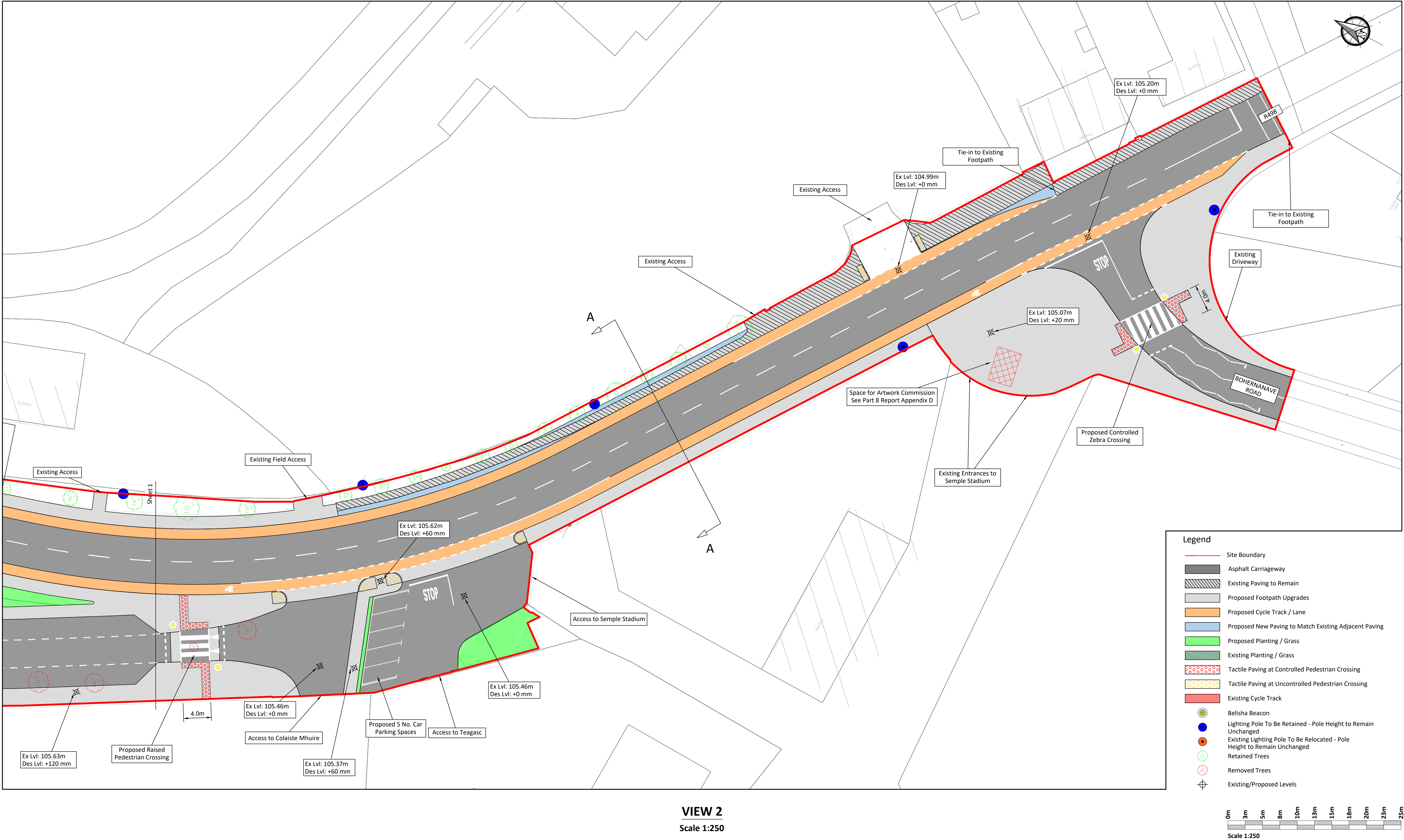


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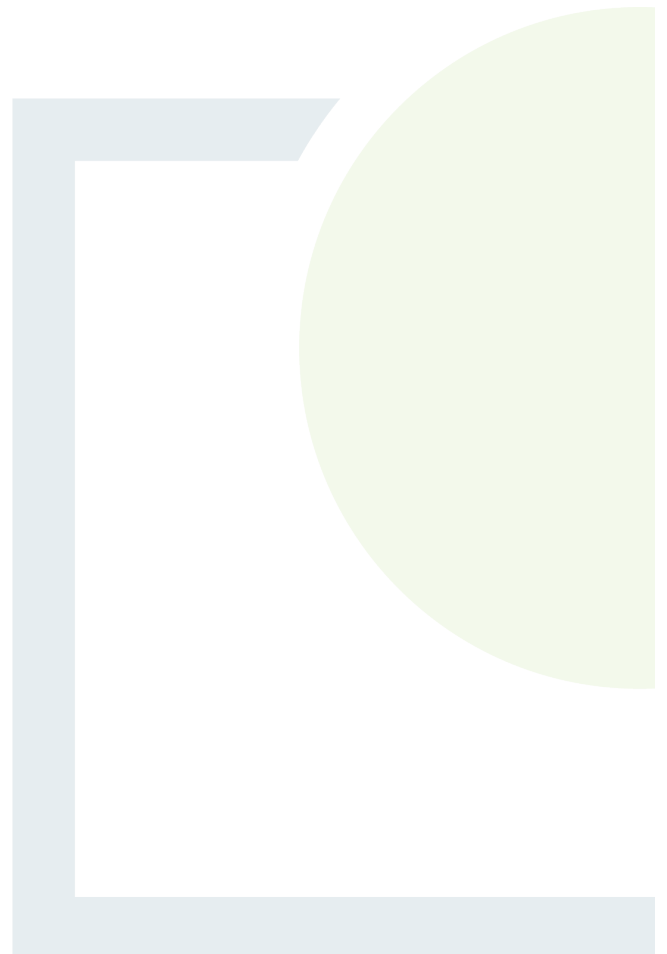
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APPENDIX B

AA Screening Report



**ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT
FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Local Authority Own Development-Shared Surface, on the R498 Thurles

(A) DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND LOCAL SITE:	
Site location:	Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Development for which permission is sought:	The project will deliver 1.5m wide cycle paths and 1.8m wide footpaths along both sides of the R498 from Semple stadium to the Technical University Thurles. There is an existing footpath in place at this location. It includes a proposed set down area for Bus traffic at Coláiste Mhuire school. The traffic will remain a two-way traffic system with a narrowed carriageway and improved crossings at the Roundabout to encourage safe crossing for students of both the College and the School. The site includes the verge area, existing footpaths and carriageway, along the R 498 at Castlemeadows, which is currently mainly paved and the existing green area outside the Coláiste Mhuire, School. The project will provide a more attractive streetscape that improves mobility for all modes of transport within the project extents. The works will deliver continuous walking routes with safe crossing points at desired locations.
Is the application accompanied by EIS	No – not required
(B) IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITE(S):	
Natura 2000 site(s) within 15km and distance to same:	<p>Within 15km SAC 002137 – Lower River Suir SAC</p> <p>PNHA 001934 – Cabragh Wetlands NHA</p> <p>PNHA 000959 – Killough Hill NHA</p> <p>None of the sites are within 1km of the site</p>

Sites within the zone of influence:	
Conservation objectives/qualifying interests of the site and the factors that contributes to the conservation value of the site: (which are taken from the Natura 2000 site synopses and, if applicable, a Conservation Management Plan: (all available at www.npws.ie)	<p>The proposed development is defined as an urban development in a business district. However, the development is <2ha and therefore, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered for this proposed development. The characteristics of the proposed development are not considered to result in a significant impact on the environment by virtue of their size, nature, or operational activities. The works entail improvement of existing roads and footpaths in Castlemeadows, to provide a safer urban space for pedestrians. Best practice guidelines will be adhered to during the construction in order to minimise the probability of impacts on the surrounding environment.</p>
Key Environmental conditions to support site integrity.	<p>The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.</p> <p>Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and • the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and • the conservation status of its typical species is favourable. <p>The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and • the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.
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(C) POSSIBLE IMPACTS ARISING FROM THE PROJECT:		
Consider the potential for direct impacts on habitats <i>Consider proposed developments within 200m of the Natura 2000 site</i>		Y/N and Comment
1.1	Could the proposed project give rise to direct loss of habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is designated, or other habitats occurring within the Natura 2000 site?	N
1.2	Could the proposed project give rise to increased human usage/access to the site, which could potentially cause deterioration of certain habitat types eg woodlands, wetlands or riverbanks. Consider proposals for development of a large scale within 1km of sensitive woodlands eg large scale residential development or hotels. Consider proposals for the development of paths or cycleways along the river.	N
1.3	Does the proposed project involve development of drainage systems? If yes, could this cause drying out of wetland or woodland habitats within the Natura 2000 site?	N
Consider the potential for impacts on water quality within the Natura 2000 site <i>Consider all proposed developments within the catchment of the Natura 2000 site.</i>		Y/N and Comment
2.1	Are there any rivers, streams or drains connecting the proposed development site and the Natura 2000 site? If yes, consider whether there is potential for construction related impacts on water quality.	N
2.2	Would the proposed project result in surface water or other discharges to rivers, streams or drains directly connected to the Natura 2000 site? If yes, consider whether the discharges could give rise to increased eutrophication or other pollution risk within the Natura 2000 site. Consider whether increased surface water discharge could give rise to increased risk of downstream storm water surges.	N
2.3	Would the proposed project require an industrial waste water discharge license? If yes, consider the potential impacts of the discharge on water quality in the Natura 2000 site.	N
2.4	Is the proposed project located within a flood zone? If yes, consider whether there is potential for construction or operational related impacts on water quality in the Natura 2000 site; consider whether the proposed project increases flood risk elsewhere in the catchment and particularly the Natura 2000 site; or increases the risk of stormwater surges downstream.	N

2.5	Are the proposals for waste water treatment in compliance with EPA requirements?	N/A
2.6	Could the proposed project contribute to cumulative negative impacts on water quality? Consider the current status of the freshwater system (see www.wfdireland.ie).	N
2.7	Would the proposed project involve dredging (construction or ongoing maintenance related)?	N
Consider potential for impact on species		Y/N and Comment
<i>Freshwater Pearl Mussel</i>		
3.1	Protection of this species will be achieved by the protection of water quality (see section 2 above), by the protection of river habitats (see section 1 above), and by the maintenance of free passage for fish.	N
<i>Freshwater Crayfish</i>		
3.2	Protection of this species will be achieved by the protection of river habitats (see section 1 above).	N
<i>Fish species including Salmon, Lamprey spp. and Twaite Shad</i>		
3.3	Protection of these species will be achieved by the protection of water quality (see section 2 above), by the protection of river habitats (see section 1 above), and by the maintenance of free passage for fish.	N
<i>Otter</i>		
3.4	Would the proposed project result in any interference with river banks within the Natura 2000 site?	N
3.5	Would the proposed project result in increased levels of disturbance to the habitat of the Otter?	N

D) NPWS ADVICE:

Summary of advice received from NPWS:	N/A
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(E) SCREENING CONCLUSION:

Screening concludes that : (Tick [✓] the appropriate box A, B or C)

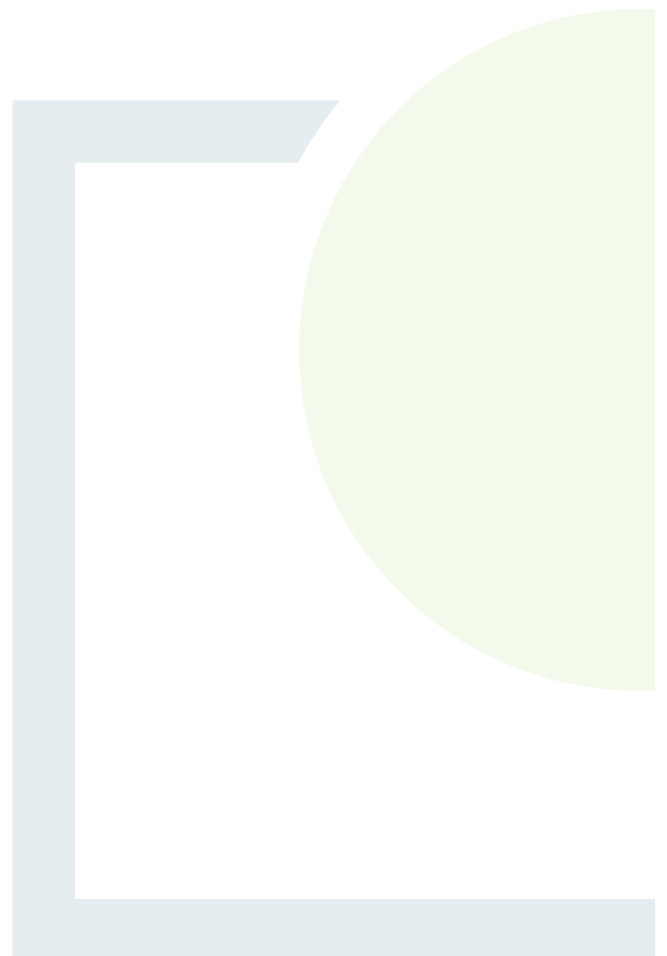
A) Appropriate Assessment is not required because the project is directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site.	
B) No potential for significant effects therefore Appropriate Assessment is not required.	✓
C) Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain. (In this situation seek a Natura Impact Statement from the applicant or reject the project. Reject if too potentially damaging or inappropriate.	
Name:	Derek Richardson
Position:	Executive Engineer
Date:	26/07/22



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APPENDIX C

EIA Screening Report



Preliminary Examination		
Planning Reference:	TBC	
Site location:	R 498, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co Tipperary.	
Proposed Development:	The project will deliver 1.5m wide cycle paths and 1.8m wide footpaths along both sides of the R498 from Semple stadium to the Technical University Thurles. There is an existing footpath in place at this location. It includes a proposed set down area for Bus traffic at Coláiste Mhuire school. The traffic will remain a two-way traffic system with a narrowed carriageway and improved crossings at the Roundabout to encourage safe crossing for students of both the College and the School. The site includes the verge area, existing footpaths and carriageway, along the R 498 at Castlemeadows, which is currently mainly paved and the existing green area outside the Colaiste Mhuire, School. The project will provide a more attractive streetscape that improves mobility for all modes of transport within the project extents. The works will deliver continuous walking routes with safe crossing points at desired locations.	
Examination		
	Yes / No/ Uncertain	Comment
Is the size of the development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?	No	Development small in scale relative to mandatory EIA threshold.
Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining, or have the potential to impact on a sensitive site or location?	No	Site carries no environmental designations. In proximity to the Lower River Suir SAC. 1km from the River Suir.
Will the development result in the production of any significant waste, or result in emissions or pollutants?	No	During the construction phase, waste generated will be limited to the existing concrete footpaths and road. These materials will be extracted and disposed of at a licenced waste facility. During construction, best practices and mitigation measures will be followed in order to avoid incidents of pollution. Therefore, a significant amount of pollution is not anticipated.
Conclusions		
<p>The proposed development does not fall under Schedule 5, Part 1. The projects under Part 1 are typically large infrastructure and energy projects and by their nature will always have significant environmental effects.</p> <p>With regards to Part 2 projects, the categories and thresholds were examined. The proposed development falls under the following category:</p> <p>10. Infrastructure projects: (b) (iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.</p> <p>(In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)</p>		

The proposed development is defined as an urban development in a business district. However, the development is <2ha and therefore, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered for this proposed development.

The characteristics of the proposed development are not considered to result in a significant impact on the environment by virtue of their size, nature, or operational activities. The works entail improvement of existing roads and footpaths in Castlemeadows, to provide a safer urban space for pedestrians. Best practice guidelines will be adhered to during the construction in order to minimise the probability of impacts on the surrounding environment.

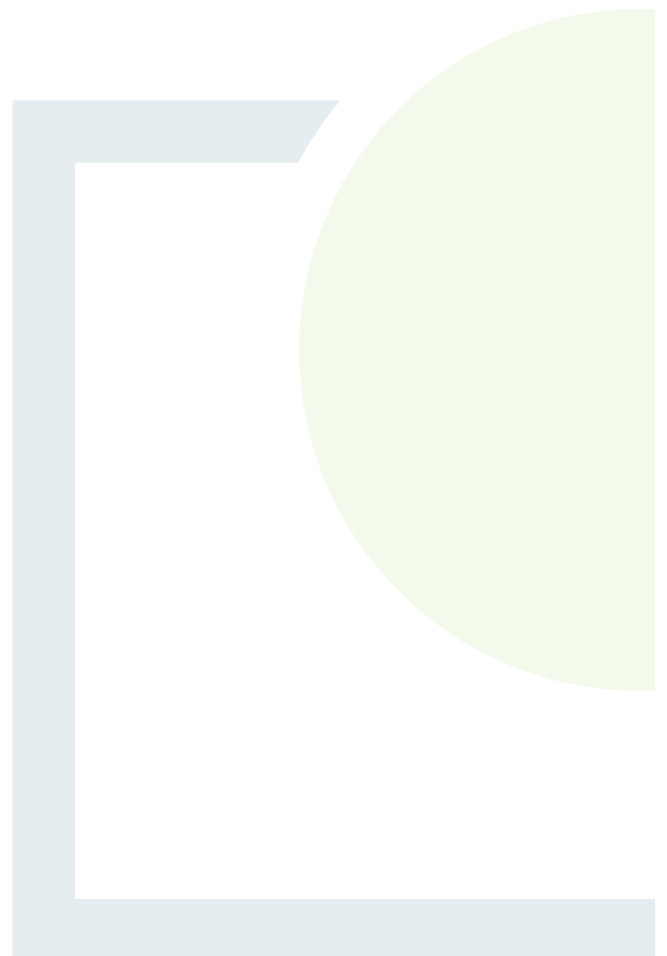
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment	EIAR not required	✓
There is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment	Screening Determination Required	
	Schedule 7A information required?	
There is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment	EIAR is required	
Name:	Derek Richardson	Date: 26/07/2022
Position	Executive Engineer, Active Travel	



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APPENDIX D

Statue/Artwork Details



- **Artwork Design and Purpose:**

Tipperary County Council in partnership with The Tipperary GAA County Board/Semple Stadium, plans to commission an artwork to celebrate Thurles as the birthplace of the GAA. The new artwork will be located at the entrance to Semple Stadium and may be lit at night. The artwork will be aesthetically significant and symbolic, represent the uniqueness of the GAA and celebrate Gaelic Games and Thurles as the town in which the GAA was founded in 1884. The artwork is to be of outstanding artistic merit and endeavour to inspire awe in those who pass it by. As part of the commission process the artists brief will be open to a range of interpretations, to develop an iconic artwork that serves to inspire and ignite the imaginations of the many future generations that will walk by, pose and dream by it. As part of this creative process the final artwork could be figurative or abstract in nature and the commissioning process will seek artistic proposals.

- **Material Type:**

The artwork location will be in a public outdoor space, exposed to the elements. It will be necessary that the artwork will be made from durable, low maintenance materials e.g. metal/bronze/stone/steel/plastic which will be determined as part of the Artwork commissioning process.

- **Technical Considerations:**

The artwork will be fixed to the public realm at the entrance to Semple Stadium and may be lit at night. It will occupy a prominent position between the two gates to Semple Stadium as detailed on drawing P22-089-0200-0006. The distance between the two gates is 4m and it is intended that the commissioned artwork would be a maximum width of 3.5m to ensure the unobstructed operation of both gates for pedestrian and vehicular movements. The depth of the artwork can be greater than 3.5m with an upper limit of 5m as the receiving space is of adequate size to suitably accommodate it. The artwork will have a max height of 6m included the height of any plinth.

The artwork is to be located a considerable setback from the edge of the public road and outside the sight line envelope for vehicles existing on to the public road. As a result there will be no impact on vehicular movements.

The artwork will be securely anchored/fixed to an appropriately sized base to accommodate it. The foundation/substructure required will be located below the finished pavement level.



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