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**Report to**

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee  
Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration & Regional Planning)

12 October 2005

**Report of**

Director of City Development

**Title**

University Square - Priory Street Access Feasibility (St Michael's Ward)

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**1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To report the findings of the University Square, Priory Street access study as requested by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee (SCRCO) in May 2005. This was as a result of calling in the Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration and Regional Planning) report of the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004 and questioning the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) proposed, primarily due to concerns regarding coach access into the new Public Square.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Agree to request Cabinet Member (UR&RP) to consider the implementation of option1 and 2a (see section 4.2 & 4.6). and the associated Traffic Regulation Orders required to reverse the one-way traffic movements along Bailey Lane and St Mary Street. Also the creation of parking restrictions, 'no loading areas', around the junction of Bayley Lane and St Mary Street plus restrictions of access for vehicles to Priory Street. To also consider the creation of three on street coach parking spaces along Priory Street.

**3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002 Cabinet approved the implementation of the new public square and the temporary traffic regulations enabling this scheme to be constructed (Appendix A). The physical alterations were practically completed in April 2004 with 12 months defect period having expired in April 2005.
- 3.2 SCRCO's main concern when reviewing the scheme was not with the design of the square itself or Priory Street's Traffic Regulation Order but the accessibility of coaches along St Mary Street to the head of Priory Street. This concern had been prompted by representations from Coventry Cathedral who had had reports from coach operators who stated their coaches could not physically make the turn from St Mary Street into Bayley Lane due to parked vehicles obstructing the highway.
- 3.3 It had also been recognised that at the time of the original transport assessment, the length of a coach could not exceed 12m. A recent change to highway legislation now enables coaches of up to 15m in length to travel on UK roads. Therefore the suitability of the existing route and consideration of possible alternative access solutions should be made in the light of this change.

3.4 As part of the access feasibility study Jacobs Babbie undertook consultation with users of University Square including the emergency services, coach and travel operators and user groups via a letter and questionnaire. A traffic study was also undertaken to understand the vehicle movements in the area. Both the questionnaire responses and the traffic count aided Jacobs Babbie when drafting their proposed options.

#### **4 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered**

4.1 The access study undertaken by Jacobs Babbie on behalf of Coventry City Council reconsidered the highway design and traffic solutions for the area, looking specifically at 3 options in an attempt to improve to the existing coach access to the scheme.

#### **4.2 Option 1 – New Parking Restrictions on St Mary Street / Bayley Lane**

4.2.1 Under the deregulation of parking in the City, obstructions to the highway still fall under the jurisdiction of the Police. In order to obtain greater control of enforcing parking restrictions and alleviate vehicle obstructions caused by illegally and legitimately by 'blue badge holders' parking on the double yellow lined carriageway, Jacobs Babbie have suggested implementing a 'No Loading Area' around the junction of St Mary's Street and Bayley Lane (Appendix B).

4.2.2 The 'No Loading Area' highway restriction is created by retaining the double yellow lines but adding signage plates adjacent to the highway identifying the designated area. This restriction prevents all parking including 'Blue Badge Holders' within the area.

4.2.3 St Mary Street does not have dedicated disabled parking spaces but has become a street where members of the public who have 'blue badge' parking exceptions have found useful for both attending facilities in the Council House and access to the Cathedral, Guildhall and a lesser extent Holy Trinity Church. The proposal would still allow a certain amount of 'blue badge' parking, as the restriction would be limited to the area around the junction to allow larger vehicles to make the turning manoeuvre.

4.2.4 Deliveries to the Council House would be effected by this proposal, as a personnel door on the corner of St Mary Street would only be able to receive goods by trolley, vehicles being unable to park directly outside. Due to the limited access afforded by the physical size of the door, it is understood that only small size items are delivered using this route. As such 'trolleying' these goods in should not prove difficult.

4.2.5 The process of creating a 'No Loading Area' restriction is different to that of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in respect that if a valid objection were lodged to the making of the order it would have to be heard at a public enquiry in front of an inspector. Where as if an objection to a TRO is lodged this is heard by and decision to implement the order Council is at the discretion of the Cabinet Member.

4.2.6 Due to the limited space available between the listed buildings, Council House and Drapers Hall, there is no opportunity to increase the width of the carriageway. Consequently the larger 15m European coaches would not physically be able to make the right turn at the end of St Mary Street. The Traffic Regulation Order would therefore have to restrict the size of coaches turning into St Mary Street.

#### **4.3 Option 2 – Reversal of St Mary Street and Bayley Lane one way traffic flow**

4.3.1 To provide a more coach friendly navigable route by alleviating the need for coaches to perform the current tight right turn at the end of St Mary Street, Jacobs Babbie have

proposed to reverse the current one-way route. This would necessitate that all vehicles enter Bayley Lane from Earl Street and unless they are granted access to Priory Street, exit the area via St Mary Street into Earl Street (Appendix C)

- 4.3.2 This option creates the positive situation where coaches and large vehicles, wishing to access Priory Street, avoid having to manoeuvre the tight right turn at the end of St Mary Street but the highway engineers have identified other issues this option creates: -
- 4.3.3 Most coaches visiting the Cathedral will arrive from Ring Road (Junction 2) along Fairfax Street, Cox Street, Jordan Well / Earl Street via the newly installed directional signage (advised of in the previous report to SCRCO) requiring a right turn into Bayley lane. The problem arises if vehicles try to turn left into Bayley lane off Earl Street. The pavement / carriageway alignment at this junction means that most vehicles would be unable to make the turn unless they cross the pavement (Appendix D)
- 4.3.4 Jacobs Batbtie have considered this situation and have concluded two solutions which have been identified in their report: -
- 4.3.5 **Option 2a** Reverse the one-way traffic flow but ban all left turns into Bayley lane. This is a simple and relatively inexpensive solution albeit it may take some specific consultation with occupiers of property in the area and their suppliers to educate them of the changes and alternative routes avoiding the restricted turn.
- 4.3.6 **Option 2b** Re-configure the junction of Bayley Lane, reducing the footway and increasing the width of the carriageway enabling a left turn from Earl Street. Although facilitating both turning movements into Bayley Lane it is a costly option due to the amount of services in the footway that would need to be made. Initial estimates for the work are in the region of £100 000.
- 4.3.7 Other issues with this either option proposed: -
- 4.3.8 The left turn from Bayley Lane into St Mary Street is a tighter turn than in the opposite direction. As such the larger vehicles which could make the turn in the opposite direction; in excess of 11.2m in length i.e. 2 and 3 axel coaches and articulated lorries, would not be able to physically turn into St Mary Street (Appendix E). As a consequence a restriction on size/length and or weight by way of new signage would be required. This is not as much of an issue as first thought as most of the large vehicles entering the area are requiring to access Priory Street therefore negating the problem.
- 4.3.9 Due to the potential changes and highway restrictions specifically those identified in 4.9.6, Jacobs Babtie has undertaken a consultation process with occupiers and users of the effected roads. Their research identified those parties who require access and what vehicles are used especially to service commercial premises. Servicing of Browns café would potentially cause the most issues with daily deliveries and particularly regarding their drinks deliveries via the dray lorry. A solution to any specific issues identified could be to agree with the organisations operating the control barriers to allow specific servicing vehicles to have access along Priory Street avoiding St Mary Street.
- 4.4 **Option 3 – Reversal of Priory Street One Way Traffic Flow**
- 4.4.1 To avoid the complexity of changing traffic flows around Bayley Lane and St Mary Street allowing a more coach friendly navigable route Jacobs Babtie considered the option of reversing the direction of traffic along Priory Street, so vehicles would access from Fairfax Street (Appendix F).

4.4.2 Based on the assumption that all parties continued to support the basis that Priory Street should have restricted vehicle access, this possibility was quickly abandoned. The reason being a solution as to how to allow vehicles that could not go through the controlled entrance to safely turn around, back out onto Fairfax Street, could not be solved based on the land currently available.

#### 4.5 **Additional benefit to the original scheme considered**

4.5.1 Finally, a concern raised by SRUCO that coach operators had been complaining about the cost of parking up in Pool Meadow Bus Station, was expensive in comparison to other towns or City's and could add to reasons why the tour operator may decide not to come to Coventry.

4.5.2 As the charging rates of the operator of the Bus Station is not within the control of the City Council, Jacobs Babbie were therefore asked to consider if coaches could 'layover' on Priory Street and if so how many could be physically accommodated?

4.5.3 The original agreed design concept of the re-designed Priory Street, University Square provided a drop off space for coaches but did not encourage on street parking. The premise being that the Phoenix Initiative's 'walk of 1000 years' would entice visitors to go beyond the Cathedral precinct spending more time exploring the City, linking up with the City's other main tourist destination Coventry Transport Museum. There was also a lay by designed within Millennium Place available for coaches to collect their passengers.

4.5.4 The risk of affording coach parking on street, immediately outside the Cathedral, is that after visitors have toured the Cathedral they then get straight back on the coach without the opportunity provided by being collected at a different location. In addition there were visual benefits of not having coaches parking on the street enabling better views of and appreciation of the Sir Basil Spence's architecture designed Cathedral. If a better solution to the coach parking issue is not implemented this may effect whether the coach operators keep Coventry on their list City's visited.

4.6 Once the highway works re-linking Fairfax Street and Hales Street for buses has been completed in the spring of 2006, the usage of Pool Meadow Bus station is expected to increase five fold. The operators of the bus station have indicated that they will not be able to accommodate long distance tourist coaches in addition to the increased bus numbers. Therefore dedicated coach parking for visitors to the Cathedral could prove useful on Priory Street. Other coach operators visiting tourist attractions in the City will have to revert to on street parking where available.

4.7 Jacobs Babbie did consider the physical space available on Priory Street and concluded that it would be possible to have a maximum of three coaches parked on Priory Street running down the left hand side of the Street. This area would need to be identified on street and would be an extension of the current coach drop off area.

4.8 **Proposal – It is therefore recommended to request Cabinet Member (UR&RP) consider a combination of option 1 and 2a reversing the one way traffic flow along Bayley Lane and St Mary Street and creating no loading areas around the junction of the two roads reducing physical obstructions. In addition dedicating 3 coach layover spaces along Priory Street.**

## 5 **Other specific implications**

5.1

	<b>Implications (See below)</b>	<b>No Implications</b>
Area Co-ordination		✓
Best Value		✓
Comparable Benchmark Data		✓
Coventry Community Plan		✓
Crime and Disorder		✓
Equal Opportunities		✓
Finance	✓	
Human Resources		✓
Human Rights Act		✓
Health and Safety		✓
Information and Communications Technology		✓
Legal Implications	✓	
Property Implications		✓
Risk Management		✓
Sustainable Development		✓
Trade Union Consultation		✓

## 6

- 6.1 **Finance** – Cost for the making of the Traffic Regulation Order's and the additional works i.e. signage and highway lining required by the recommended options would be met from funds within the original scheme budget.
- 6.2 If option 2b was selected as the preferred solution, there would be a need to allocate the PPR process the majority of the estimated cost of the £100 000.
- 6.3 **Legal Implications** – The regulation of traffic by the Council is made by the introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Any objections received to the draft order would have to be considered by Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration & Regional Planning) before the order could be confirmed and given legal effect.

## 7 Monitoring

- 7.1 Working with Legal & Democratic Services, Development Projects will draft the required Traffic Regulation Orders and through the formal process consult with potentially effected parties and monitor the order during the statutory 21day objection period.

## 8 Timetable

- 8.1 SCRCO's recommendations would be taken back to Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration & Regional Planning) for consideration.

List of background papers

Proper officer: Director of City Development

Author: Telephone 1377  
Paul Beesley, Team Leader - City Centre Property Development, Development Projects  
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors:  
Lynda Williams – Traffic Design  
Patrick McNally – Facilities Management (Accommodation Services)

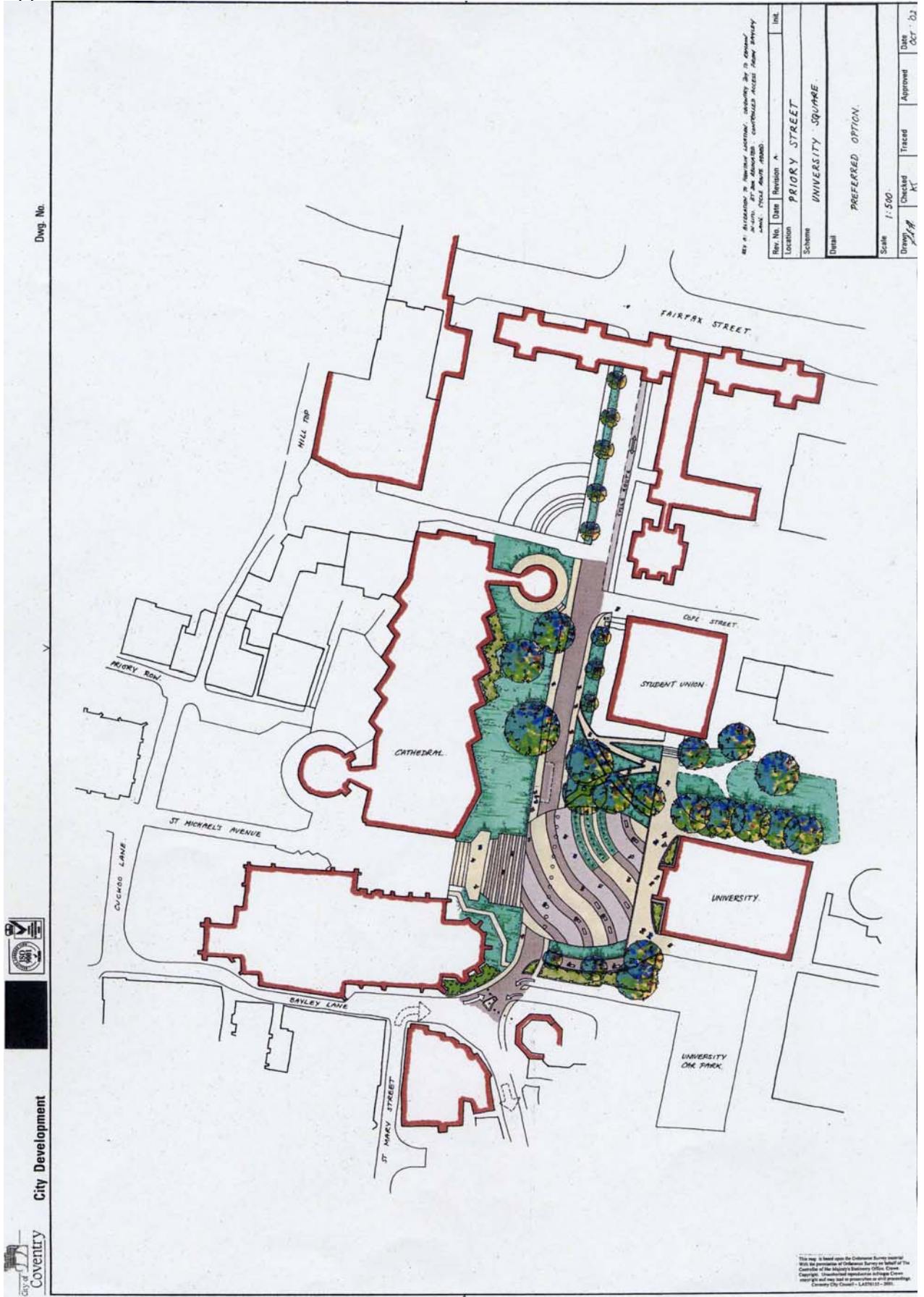
Papers open to Public Inspection

**Description of paper**

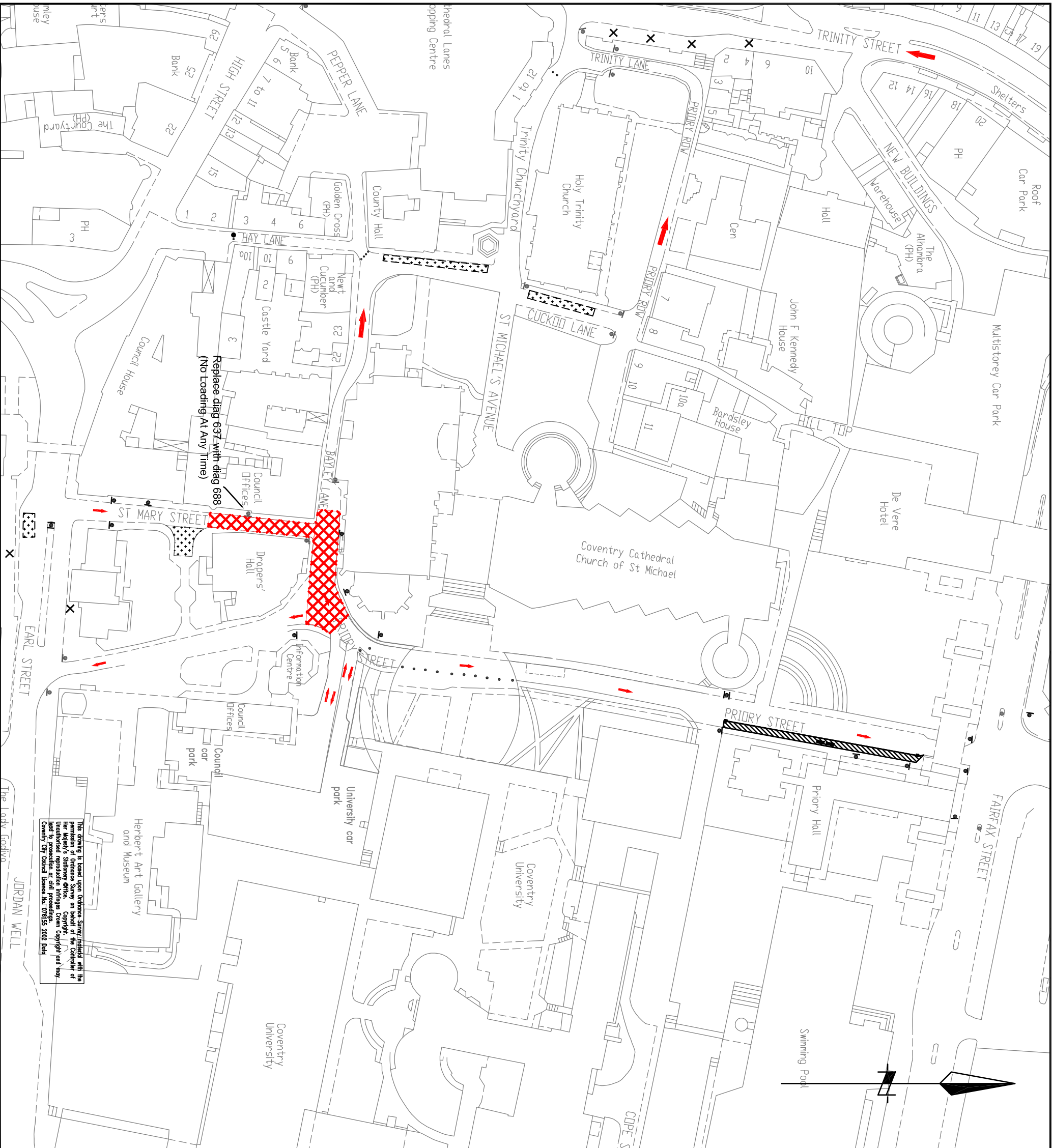
**Location**

None

Appendix A







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**Legend:**



Proposed "No Loading" area



One Way  
(in direction indicated)



Disabled Parking Bay



Sign Posts



Bus Stop



Existing bollards



Cycle Lane

Rev	Date	Revision	Purpose of revision	MD	SA	PM
0	27/7/05	Original		MD	SA	PM
1		Revision		MD	SA	PM

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**PRIORY STREET ACCESS**

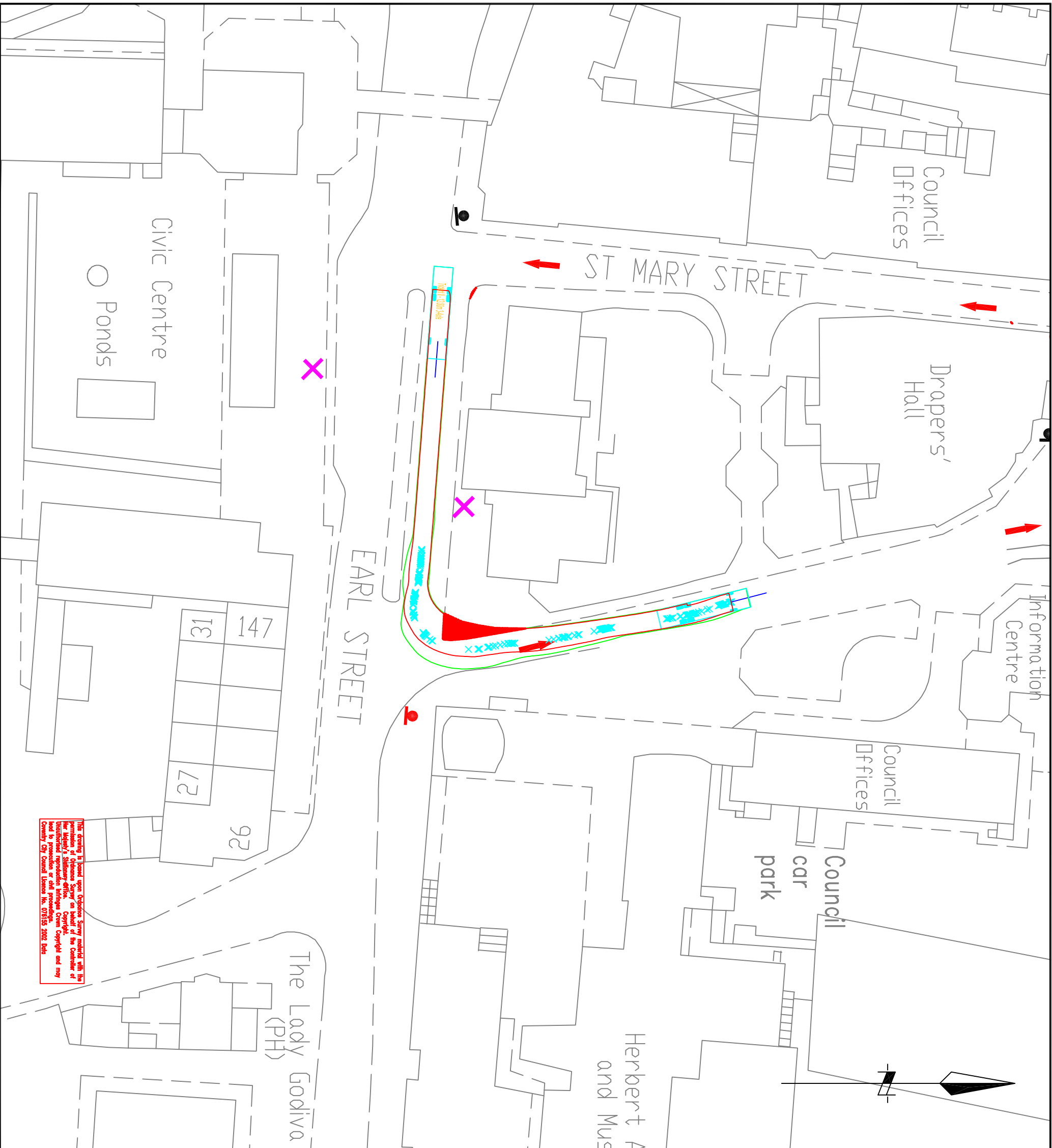
**Option 1 - New parking restrictions**

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**Legend:**

-  Swept Path
-  One Way  
(in direction indicated)
-  Existing signs
-  Bus Stop
-  Existing bollards

Rev	Date	Revision	Purpose of revision	MD	SA	JMC
0	21/7/05	Original				

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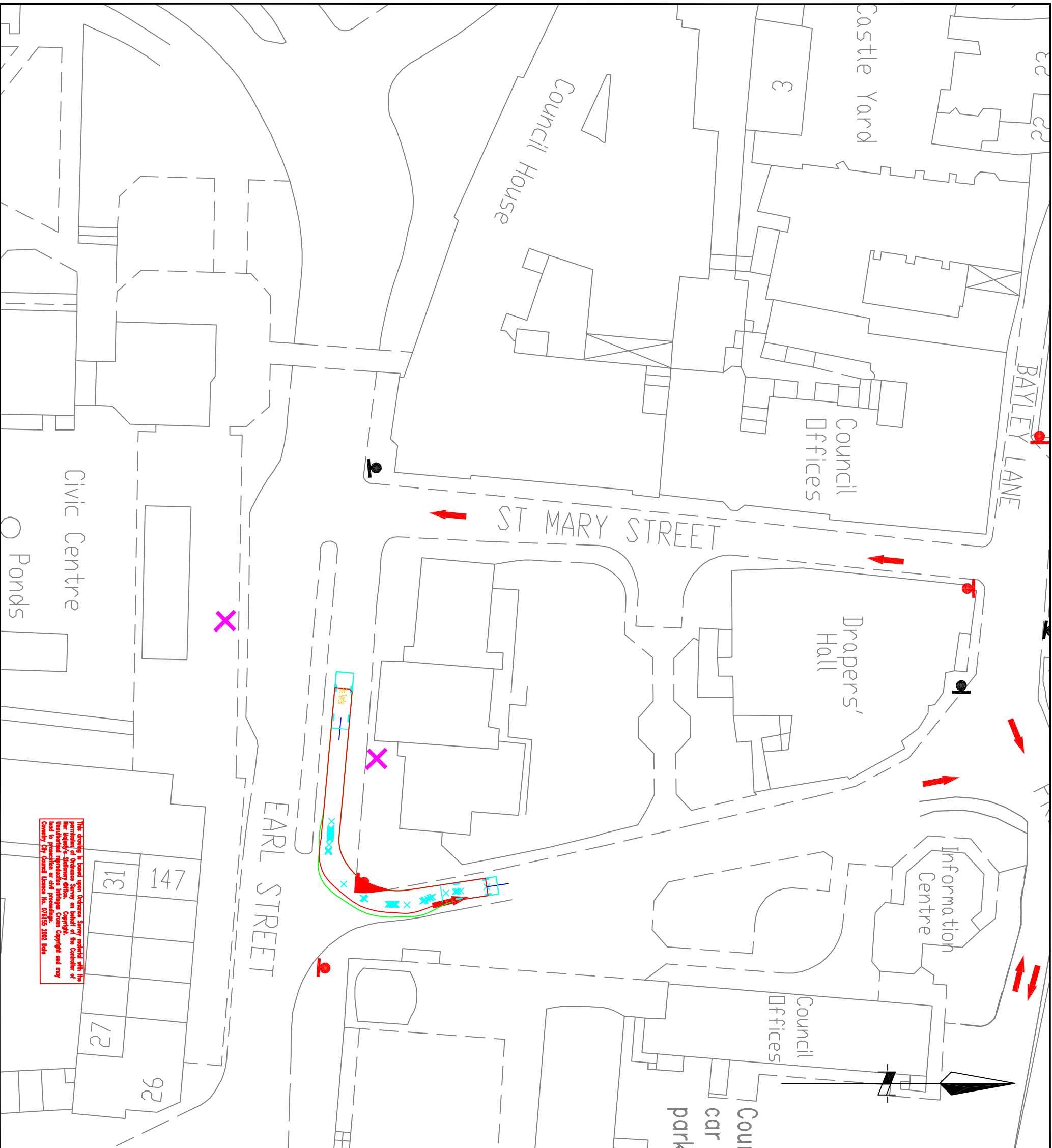
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**12M TRIPLE AXLE COACH**  
**TURN NEGOTIATION**

**Drawing status**

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**Legend:**

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(in direction indicated)
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Rev	Date	Revision	Purpose of revision	MD	SA	JM/C
0	21/7/05	Original		Drawn	Checked	Approved

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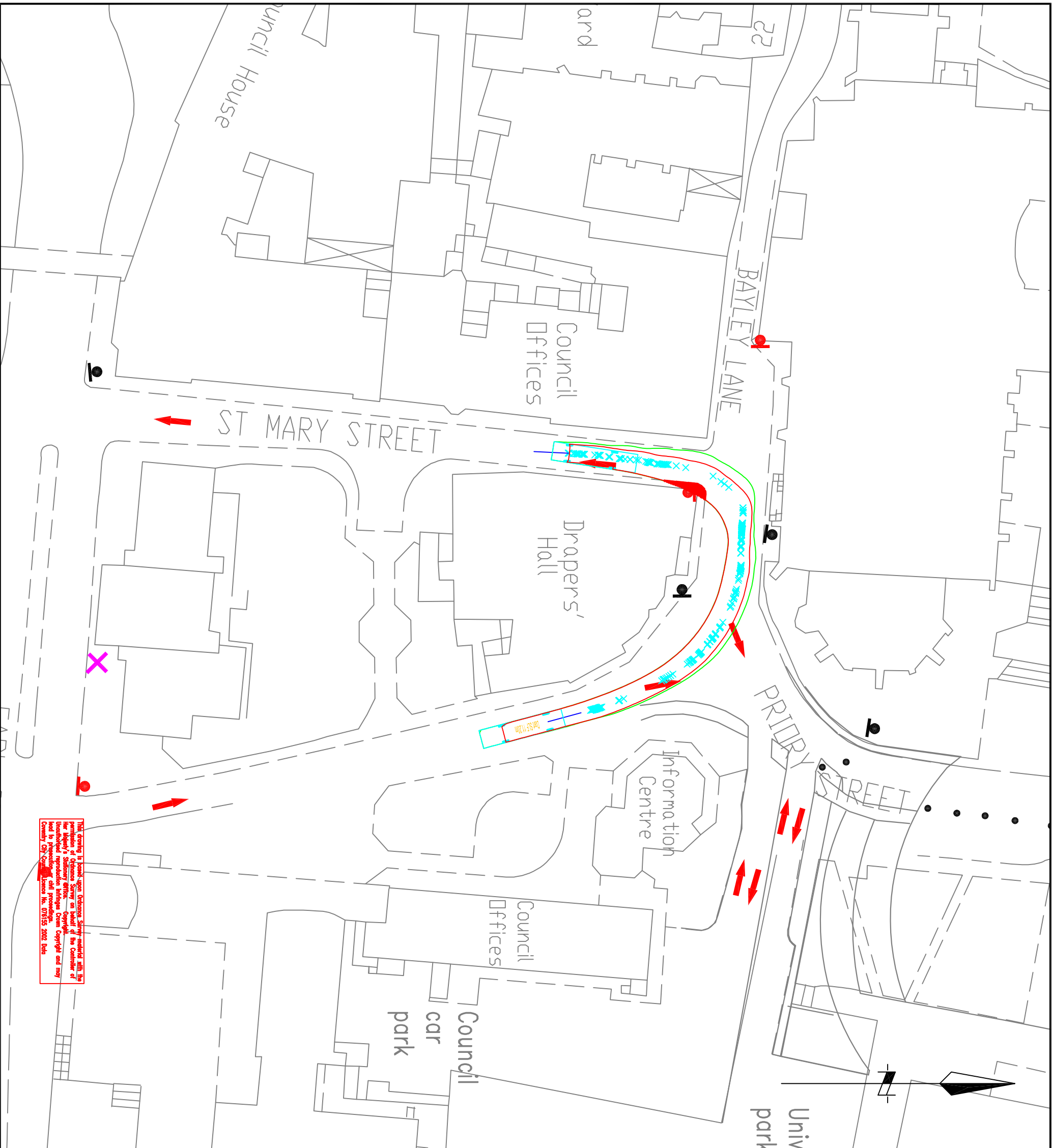
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 TURN NEGOTIATION

**Drawing status**

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**Legend:**

-  Swept Path
-  One Way  
(in direction indicated)
-  Existing signs
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-  Existing bollards

Rev	Date	Revision	Purpose of revision	MD	SA	JM/C
0	21/7/05	Original				

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**Project**  
 COACH TURN NEGOTIATION

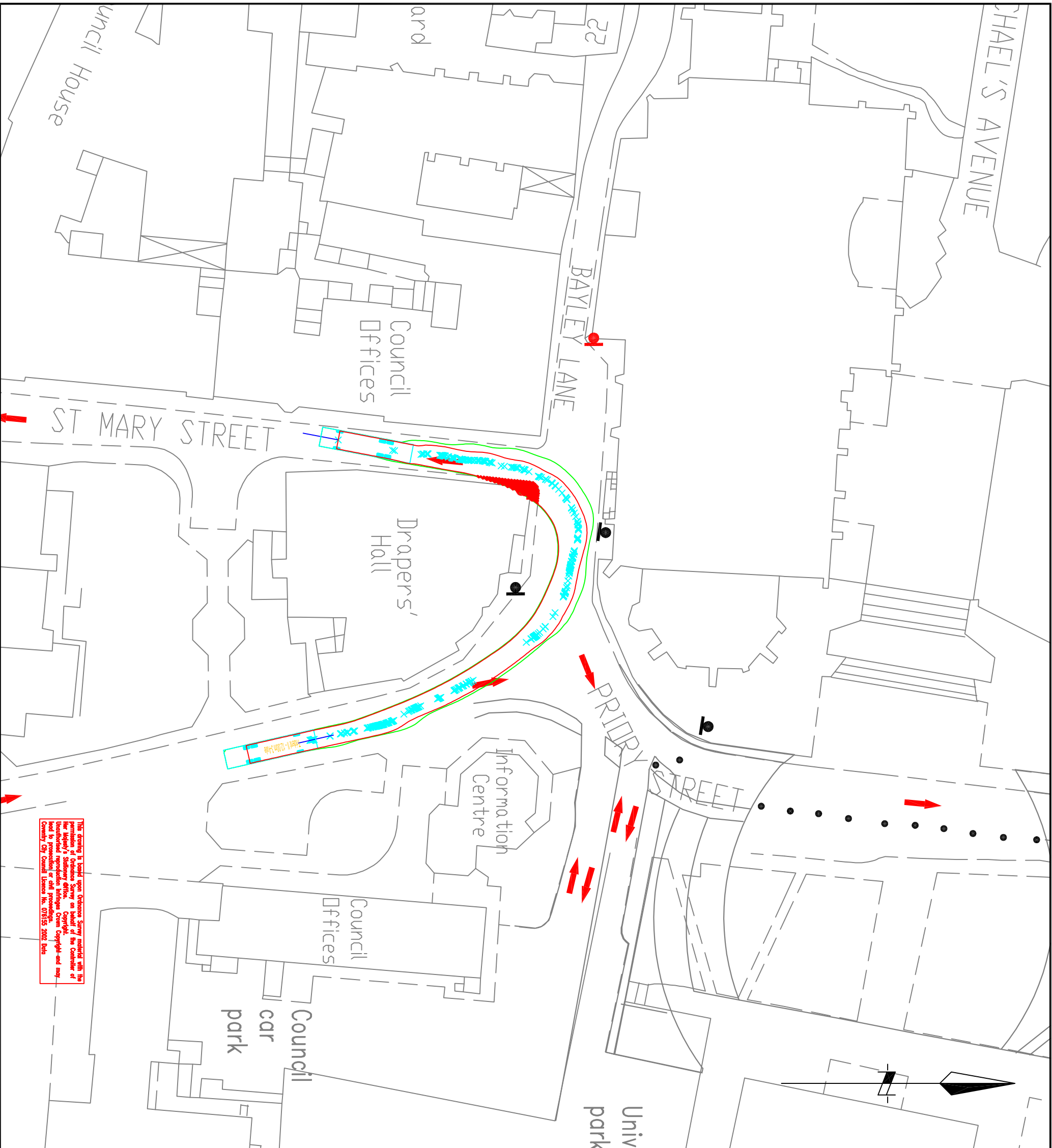
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**Legend:**

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-  One Way  
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Rev	Date	Revision	Purpose of revision	MD	SA	JMC
0	21/7/05	Original				

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**Project**  
**PRIORY STREET ACCESS**

**Drawing title**  
**AUTOTRACK**  
**12M TRIPLE AXLE COACH**  
**TURN NEGOTIATION**

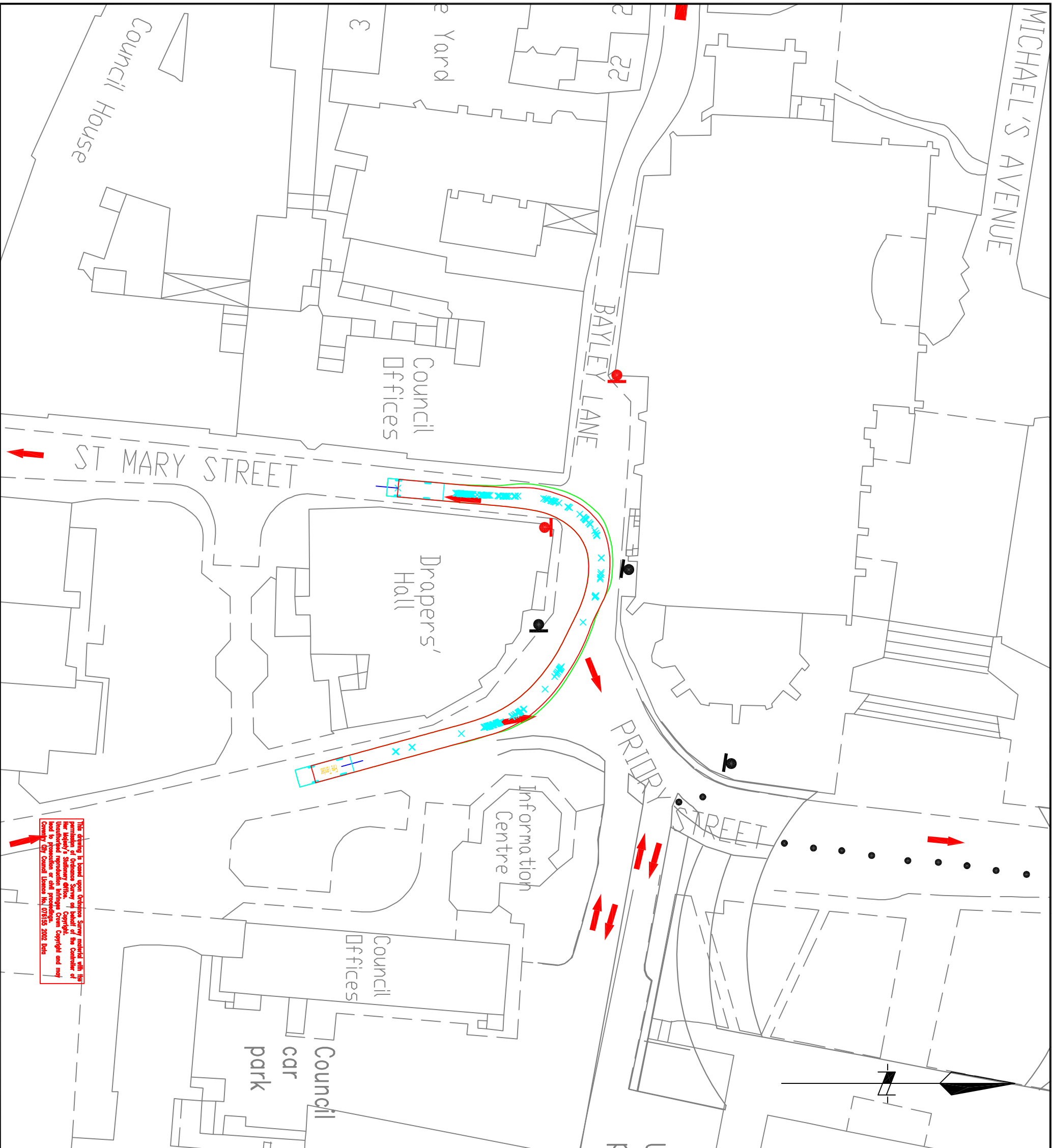
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**Legend:**

- One Way  
(in direction indicated)
- Existing signs
- Bus Stop
- Existing bollards

Rev	Revision	Date	MD	SA	JMAC
0	217705		Original		
			Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked/ Approved

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FIRE TENDER  
TURN NEGOTIATION

**Drawing status**

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Client no.		

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