

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE – CLASS E OFFICES TO CLASS F1 PLACE OF WORSHIP

TRAVEL PLAN STATEMENT

15 BENNET ROAD, READING, RG2 0QX

ON BEHALF OF CHURCH OF PENTECOST UK



Pegasus Group

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 **DESIGN**  **ENVIRONMENT**  **PLANNING**  **ECONOMICS**  **HERITAGE**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Travel Plan Statement (TP) has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of the Church of Pentecost UK. The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of 15 Bennet Road in Reading from offices (Class E) to a place of worship (Class F).

1.2 A TP has been prepared to encourage sustainable travel to the Church. The Reading Borough Council Local Plan states that Travel Plans are required for developments of 10 or more dwellings and for developments over 1000sqm of non-residential floor space. This proposal comprises 808sqm, and therefore falls below the Council's threshold for a Travel Plan becoming necessary. However, the applicant is committed to encouraging travel to the site by sustainable modes and to minimise demand for car parking.

1.3 The TP sets out initiatives and measures to reduce encourage travel by sustainable modes and reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips to and from the Church of Pentecost.

1.4 The following key areas are addressed in this TP:

- i. Aims and objectives of the TP;
- ii. Initiatives and measures to promote accessibility by non-car modes of travel and minimise single occupancy car travel; and
- iii. Roles and responsibilities for the TP Co-Ordinator.

Travel Plan Guidance

1.5 The TP has been developed with consideration to the following documents as appropriate:

- i. Planning Practice Guidance 'Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements' (2014);

- ii. Good Practice Guidelines, Delivering Travel Plan through Planning Process, published by DfT (2009);
- iii. The Essential Guide to Travel Planning, published by DfT (2008);
- iv. A guide on Travel Plans for Developers (2006);
- v. Making Residential Travel Plans Work; Guidelines for New Developments published by DfT (2005);
- vi. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019);
- vii. Reading Borough Council Local Transport Plan 3: Strategy 2011-2026 (2011);
- viii. Reading Borough Council Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan: 2020-2030 (2019);
- ix. Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning (2011); and
- x. Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

1.6 As stipulated in the Planning Practice Guidance 'Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements' (2014), Travel Plans are long-term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable travel into the planning process. They are based on evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development and set measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel (such as promoting walking and cycling). They should not, however, be used as an excuse for unfairly penalising drivers and cutting provision for cars in a way that is unsustainable and could have negative impacts on the surrounding streets.

1.7 This TP has been considered in parallel to the redevelopment proposals and therefore, it will be integrated into the design and occupation of the new site rather than retrofitted after occupation.

2.0 TRAVEL PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The measures and initiatives included in this TP will result in benefits, including:

- i. Increased use of public transport;
- ii. Improved air quality;
- iii. Reduced congestion and traffic;
- iv. Promote walking and cycling;
- v. Improved road safety;
- vi. Improved quality of life; and
- vii. Improved sense of community.

Aim

2.2 The primary aim of this TP is to minimise SOV trips associated with the Church of Pentecost UK and its associated community uses by promoting and encouraging the use of more sustainable alternatives. This TP aims to positively influence the travel patterns and behaviours of the congregants of the Church of Pentecost through the encouragement of greater use of active travel, public transport and other modes of sustainable travel to reduce the number of cars accessing the site.

Objectives

2.3 The primary objectives of the TP are to:

- i. Reduce the number of single occupancy car trips made to/from the Church of Pentecost UK;
- ii. Widen the travel options available - congregants should be made aware of the sustainable transport choices available to them from the outset;
- iii. Reduce reliance of the car;

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- iv. Increase awareness about the health, environmental and safety benefits of more walking and other forms of sustainable and active travel; and
 - v. Make staff and visitors to the Church of Pentecost UK aware of all sustainable travel modes available to them.

3.0 SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Site Location

- 3.1 The site comprises an 808sqm office space (Class E) to the north of Bennet Road, Reading.
- 3.2 This site is located approximately 3.8 kilometres south of Reading town centre. The site is bound by Bennet Road to the south, and existing industrial land uses to the north, east and west. The site is located under 2.5 kilometres from local residential areas including Whitley, Whitley Wood and Katesgrove. The location of the site in the context of the surrounding area is shown in **Figure 1**.
- 3.3 The existing vehicular access is located on the southern site boundary off the verge of Bennet Road, directly in front of the property. Further access to a car parking area to the rear of the property is located to the east of the site from a dropped kerb access off Bennet Road. Each of these access points have visibility splays of 2.4 x 43 metres, which is appropriate for the local speed limit of 30mph along Bennet Road according to guidance within Manual for Streets (MfS).

Pedestrian Facilities

- 3.4 There is a comprehensive network of footways within the vicinity of the site that provide access to the site from adjacent local residential areas, bus stops and Reading town centre.
- 3.5 There is a continuous footway either side of Bennet Road from the east to west, both of which incorporate dropped kerbs at access junctions, and there is a pedestrian crossing with tactile paving at the traffic light junction at the eastern end of Bennet Road. At the western end of Bennet Road, there are controlled pedestrian crossings with tactile paving and dropped kerbs to facilitate pedestrian movement over the A33 roundabout.

- 3.6 The footway along Bennet Road links the site to the residential area in the east, towards the area of Whitley. To the west, the footways run North into central Reading, linking to the residential areas of Coley Park, Coley and Katesgrove.

Cyclist Facilities

- 3.1 There is a shared cycleway/footway along the A33 to the north and south of the junction with Bennet Road. This links to the southern extent of the industrial park to the south and into central Reading to the north.
- 3.2 The area around the proposed site has low gradients, which is considered to make cycling a viable alternative to private vehicular journeys.
- 3.3 There is National Cycle Network (NCN) route 23 at the western end of Bennet Road. This is a traffic-free route that travels parallel to the A33 in a northerly direction towards the centre of Reading. To the south, the route extends to Basingstoke.

Public Transport

- 3.4 There is a bus stop named 'Bennet Road' located approximately 30 metres from the eastern end of Bennet Road, totalling a distance of approximately 450 metres from the site. The stop on the western side of the B3031 has a shelter, seating, pole, flag and timetable information. The stop on the eastern side of the road has a pole, flag and timetable information.
- 3.5 The services available from this stop are summarised on **Table 3.1** and bus routes are detailed on **Figure 2**.

Table 3.1 – Summary of Bus Services to Bennet Road

Service	Route	Service Provider	First Bus/Last Bus		Approximate Frequency Intervals (Minutes)		
			Weekdays	Sunday	Weekdays	Saturday	Sunday
6	Reading Station – Whitley Wood	Reading Buses	04:45/03:25	06:27/03:25	10	10 - 15	20
6	Whitley Wood – Reading Station	Reading Buses	05:08/04:03	05:03/04:03	10	10 - 20	20
7	Reading Station – Fleet	Reading Buses	06:01/19:38	10:14/18:14	60 - 120	60 - 120	120
7	Fleet – Reading Station	Reading Buses	06:51/20:15	10:52/18:52	60 - 120	60 - 120	120

3.10 The first bus from the centre of Reading arrives at Bennet Road at 04:45 on weekdays, and the last bus into the centre of Reading is at 04:03. The journey from Bennet Road to Reading Station takes approximately 13 to 14 minutes.

3.11 There are regular services on Sundays, which is the day likely to attract most people to the venue for the weekly Sunday gathering. The first bus arrives at Bennet Road from the centre of Reading at 06:27 on a Sunday morning, and the last departs at 04:03. These bus services are frequent throughout the day, with intervals elongating into the evening up to an hour between services from midnight onwards.

- 3.12 There are additional bus stops within walking distance along the A33, including 'Reading Gate Retail Park' bus stop located approximately 400 metres southwest of the site. These are served by bus routes 50 and 600, linking to central Reading to the north, and to Green Park and the Park Ride car park to the south respectively.

Accessibility Conclusion

- 3.13 It is concluded that the local highway network is suitable for pedestrian and cycle trips. The site is located close to an established residential area.
- 3.14 It is also concluded that the site is within walking distance of frequent public transport services every day of the week with the buses providing connections to Reading town centre and surrounding residential areas with a reasonable short journey time of only 13-14 minutes from early morning to late at night.
- 3.15 Therefore, the TP concludes that the change of use proposal is accessibly located providing the opportunity for the congregation to travel to the site by sustainable travel modes on a daily and weekly basis as a genuine alternative to SOV use.

4.0 INITIATIVES, MEASURES AND MARKETING

Initiatives and Measures

- 4.1 The initiatives detailed in **Table 4.1** are intended to be implemented from the outset and are considered achievable at this stage. It is expected that staff, congregants and visitors will arrange their travel arrangements to the site in accordance with this TP.

Table 4.1 – Travel Plan Measures

Promotional Measures	
1	The provision of a 'Travel Information Pack' for users, which will contain details of how trips to the place of worship can be achieved by other means to the private car. It will give information on bus routes and frequencies, the Church minibus (including how to book), local cycle routes and details of the on-site car parking booking system.
2	A noticeboard will be located in a shared area and will contain similar information to that in the 'Travel Information Pack' such as local cycle maps, bus timetables, details of local cycle retailers, cycle parking facilities and details of the on-site car parking booking system.
3	Provision of leaflets to visitors containing information on the health benefits of walking and cycling.
Walking and Cycling Measures	
4	Walking and cycling maps will be contained within the Travel Information Packs.
5	Walking and cycling based websites will be promoted.

6	16 cycle storage in the form of Sheffield Stands is provided at the front of the site, close to the site entrance.
Public Transport Measures	
7	The provision of up to date public transport information will be on noticeboards and through Church Newsletters, as appropriate.
8	The promotion of the minibus service run by the Church of Pentecost, with the ability for the service to be extended.
Car Sharing	
9	Car sharing will be promoted to encourage visitors to the site to car share, particularly for Sunday services. Specific attention will be paid to car sharing from Central Reading.
10	If required, an internal car share database could be set up to organise car sharing to the Church.
Car Parking Management	
11	Visitors will be required to book a car parking space in advance to minimise the number of cars accessing the site.

Travel Plan Coordinator

- 4.2 Experience has shown that the most successful Travel Plans have a dedicated Travel Plan Coordinator (TPC) who is the main driving force for a particular site on a day-to-day basis.

4.3 A TPC will be appointed within the Church congregation. The role of the TPC will be to coordinate the promotion of the TP. In summary, the duties of the TPC are:

- Promoting and encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport, including providing information on the Church minibus and how to book and use this service;
- Carrying out the initial travel audit; and
- Providing information and updates to congregants.

4.4 The duties of the TPC have been designed to help encourage users of the site to change their travel behaviour by implementing the set-out measures, in order to help deliver the maximum possible uptake of sustainable transport modes.

Marketing

4.5 Users will be made aware of the initiatives detailed in **Table 4.1** through a number of measures, including the following:

- i. Congregation newsletters;
- ii. Travel Plan information provided by staff; and
- iii. Staff meetings.

Monitoring - Travel Audit

4.6 Within three months of occupation, a Travel Audit will be conducted to establish and formally set out the following within an updated TPS to WSCC:

- i. how staff currently travel to and from the site;
- ii. staff shift patterns;
- i. how many people live in the same postcode area (to assess the potential for car sharing and inform routing of the mini-bus);
- ii. an inventory of existing facilities to aid sustainable travel (i.e. cycle parking

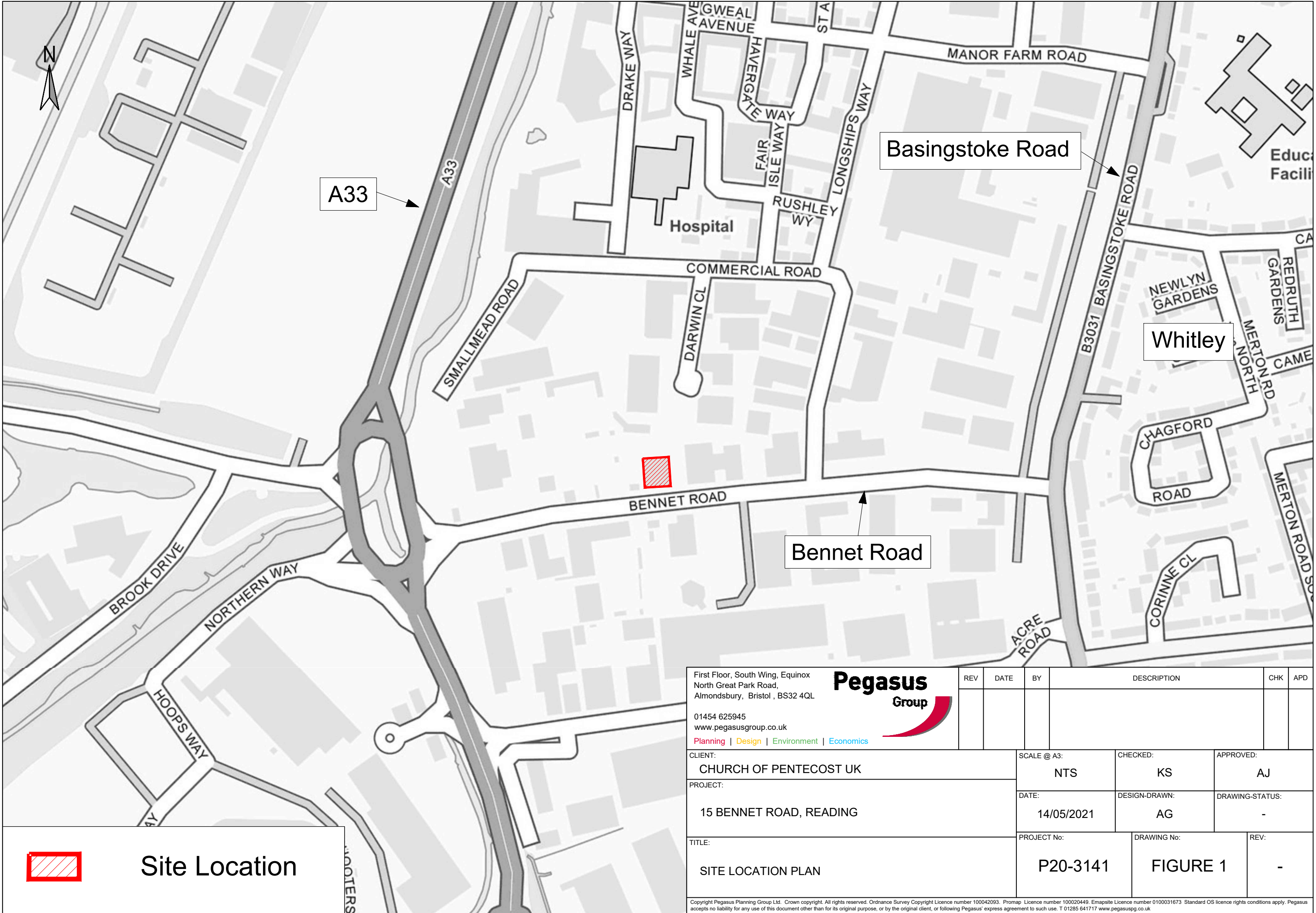
etc.); and

iii. potential for further facilities to aid sustainable travel.

- 4.7 The TPC will monitor the parking booking system and the Church minibus usage. If required, subject to demand, the minibus service will be expanded to accommodate more congregants travelling to and from the Sunday services and other activities.

FIGURE 1

\\0.7.1\DATA\PROJECTS6 - P20 PROJECTS\11 - P20-3012 TO P20-337\IP20-3141 - ATTENBOROUGH HOUSE, 15 BENNET ROAD, READING, RG2 0QX\TR2. DRAWINGS\SKETCHES\IP20-3141_SK002.DWG



Site Location

First Floor, South Wing, Equinox
North Great Park Road,
Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4QL

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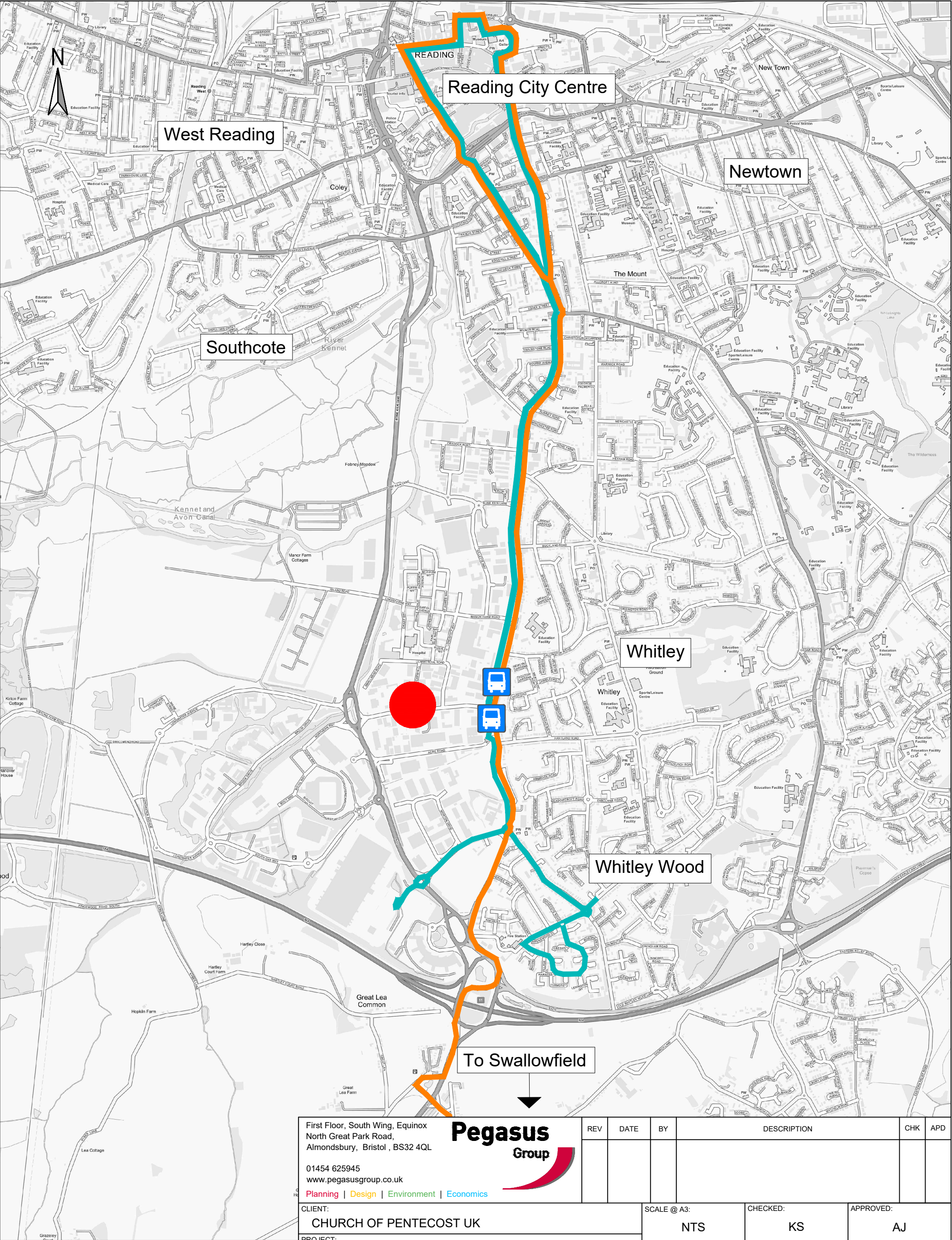
CLIENT:
CHURCH OF PENTECOST UK

PROJECT:
15 BENNET ROAD, READING

TITLE:
SITE LOCATION PLAN

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APD
SCALE @ A3: NTS			CHECKED: KS	APPROVED: AJ	
DATE: 14/05/2021			DESIGN-DRAWN: AG	DRAWING-STATUS: -	
PROJECT No: P20-3141			DRAWING No: FIGURE 1	REV: -	

FIGURE 2



 Site Location

 Bus Stops

 Number 6 Emerald Bus Route

 Number 7 Tiger Bus Route

First Floor, South Wing, Equinox
North Great Park Road,
Almondsbury, Bristol , BS32 4QL



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CLIENT:	CHURCH OF PENTECOST UK
PROJECT:	15 BENNET ROAD, READING
TITLE:	BUS ROUTE PLAN

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APD
SCALE @ A3:			CHECKED:	APPROVED:	
NTS			KS	AJ	
DATE:			DESIGN-DRAWN:	DRAWING-STATUS:	
14/05/2021			AG	-	
PROJECT No:			DRAWING No:	REV:	
P20-3141			FIGURE 2	-	

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