



WBC's California Crossroads Regeneration Project

Dear Finchampstead Residents,

We hope this newsletter will answer some of your questions and give you some detail, in a consolidated form, of the upcoming WBC construction work at the crossroads. We have included the plans for Phase One of the works and will issue another newsletter with details of Phases Two and Three at the relevant time.

We acknowledge that it will cause disruption to many residents and all businesses around the crossroad junction and in the area, but hope that WBC's work runs to time so we are all inconvenienced for as short a time as possible. We understand that work has to be finished in time for the new school year in September. Meanwhile we would like to encourage everyone to support all the local shops and businesses as life is not going to be easy for them.

This "improvement" work went out for Public Consultation many years ago and was considered by the Parish Councillors. We felt it was an opportunity to revitalise the "retail" centre of Finchampstead which was, and still is, showing its age. We hope it will bring a sense of community to the area and make it safer.

We have learned from WBC that the project involves a complete reconstruction of the crossroads substrata and the decorative top surface is incidental in terms of cost and timescale.

Also, the extended length of time scheduled for the project is due to having the shops remain open for the duration, as endorsed by the residents in the public consultation.

Had the crossroads simply been closed off it could have been done in a couple of months, at a reduced cost, but it would have been disastrous for the shops.

Whilst some of the diversions look circuitous it is because a diversion has to be suitable for all types of vehicles (including HGV's) and to discourage "non-locals" trying to wind their way through residential areas.

We are also pleased to advise that a legal instrument has been taken out by WBC to prevent any roadworks on the new layout for three years, except in an extreme emergency.

Ongoing communications will be available on the WBC and Developers websites. WBC are also issuing a fortnightly newsletter. Details can be found on page 11.

The Parish Council hopes the scheme will deliver benefits to the community:-

- * A 21st century junction (see page 6, Poynton)
- * A community feel around the retail heart of Finchampstead
- * Slower traffic as scheme has been designed for a 20mph road
- * Extra pedestrian crossings
- * New drainage infrastructure
- * Cosmetic improvements to include totems and bollards reflecting the heritage of Finchampstead

Contents

P1	Introduction
P2	Design Plan
P3	Additional information on design, Timeline and Buses
P4	Q&A with David Cornish, Borough & Parish Councillor
P5	Artwork
P6	Poynton
P7	Phase One Road Closures 1 of 3
P8	Phase One Road Closures 2 of 3
P9	Phase One Road Closures 3 of 3
P10	Phase One Diversion
P11	Contacts
P12	SOS



Artwork,
Gorse Ride
Juniors





California Crossroads Design



THE PLAN, NOTATIONS

1. Footpath around petrol station forecourt
2. Targeted vegetation removal to give more room for pedestrians
3. Direction of travel reversed
4. Prioritised pedestrian space to encourage slower speeds to and from car park
5. Bollards provided to prohibit vehicle access
6. Vehicle access retained for shop access, property parking and disabled parking
7. Parking removed
8. Totem gateway markers at “raised tables” (these can hold a small/medium sized vehicle at their highest point) to provide crossing points and reduce speed.
9. Access to Londis and Bob’s retained with a crossing point
10. Central crossing point with a refuge



The Plan, additional information

- All approaches will have a raised table crossing point in advance of roundabout area. This will ensure approaching vehicle speeds are reduced as they approach the junction, designed for a 20mph road.
- Traditional circulatory road markings will not be installed. The leaf pattern design will be laid in a circulatory layout, to provide a visual sense of a roundabout.
- Each crossing point at every arm of the roundabout will be supplemented with give way style white markings to help road users identify the safe stopping area on all approaches.
- There will be an additional raised crossing table at the very centre of the crossroads.
- Existing barriers around the roundabout and crossing points will be removed as they do not comply with current guidance and standards. Bollards will be placed in key locations.
- The current access road serving Avery Corner Car Park will continue to be two-way allowing access and egress at the same time.
- The one-way system, outside the PO and shops, would only affect users utilising the parking spaces directly outside of the shop frontages.

Pedestrian access throughout the site will be maintained in all directions throughout the scheme

Timeline of works

On 12th February 2024 Phase One will begin which will see the works on Nine Mile Ride at the junction with Finchampstead Road, in the area adjacent to Bob’s Fish and Chips and the Londis.

Phase Two will start around May 2024 on Nine Mile Ride adjacent to Cresswell’s Garage, continuing down Nine Mile Ride over the roundabout.

Phase Three, due to start in July 2024, will see works take place on Avery Corner and at Avery Car Park.

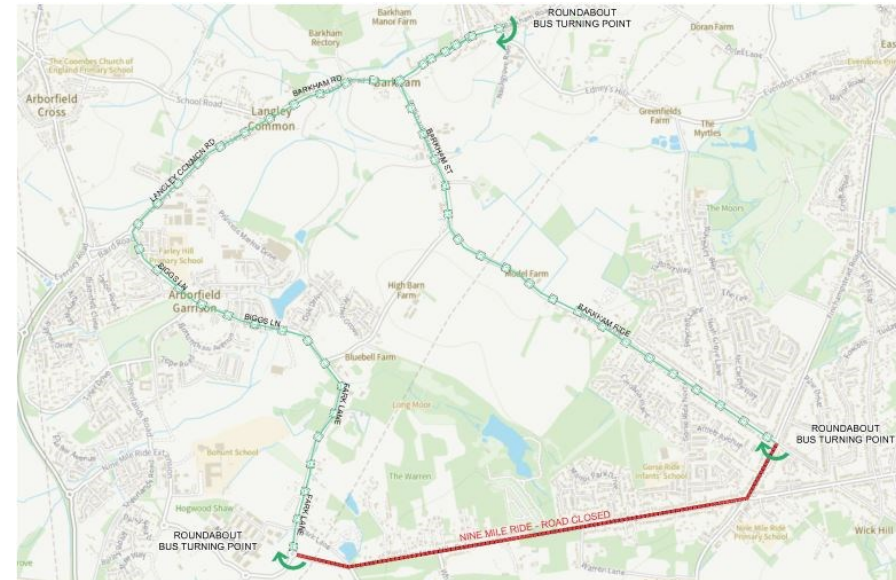
The work is due to finish in September 2024 and will be carefully monitored throughout.

BUSES

The bus companies have been contacted and are aware of the works. They will continue to serve as much of the route as possible, however some locations will need to be temporarily closed for the duration of the project.

Reading buses, Leopard 3, have proposed a diverted route utilising Barkham Street – shown on the plan below.

<https://www.reading-buses.co.uk/service-updates>



Thames Valley Buses, 125, have confirmed a diverted route utilising Foxcote and Kiln Ride, with a replacement stop due to be in operation along Windsor Ride. [Service updates - Thames Valley Buses](#)

Information regarding bus routes will be available to view on both Reading Buses and Thames Valley Buses websites for the duration of the scheme.

WBC advise that the EMERGENCY services (fire, police and ambulance) have been emailed the plans of the road closures and diversions and the plans have been dropped into the local stations. Also they will have been notified by Streetworks for upcoming roadworks.



Why do we need this project?

A selection of questions and answers from your Borough and Parish Councillor, David Cornish

Is it necessary?

The project originated from Planning Consents given for the large amounts of housing development at Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park, at least ten years ago. The assessment by Highways Officers at the time of these Planning Applications was that the resulting increases in traffic on Nine Mile Ride would eventually impact California Crossroads, and this would need mitigating. Getting the developers to fund this (they are paying for it, not the council) by means of a condition on the Planning consent would have required robust technical evidence to prove that it was necessary. It was also an opportunity to revitalise a part of Finchampstead that is undeniably starting to show its age.

Is it a good use of money?

Developer contributions are a complex topic! Broadly, they must be used according to the planning consent from which they arise and cannot be used for maintenance projects such as road repairs. Cancelling the project could mean handing money back including what has already been spent on consultation, design and procurement of the contractor. Then, if in say ten years' time (and remember, only about half of the Arborfield development has been built so far), it was decided that the project was needed after all, the money wouldn't be there to fund it. Therefore, this is a 'now or never' project and the council has decided that on balance, it's best to continue with it.

Will it be safe?

The Highways officers are the technical experts, and they are responsible for the safety

issues. Whilst residents and councillors (including myself) may all have our opinions, we don't have that technical knowledge. Elected councillors can't override the technical assessments of Highways officers, probably correctly so. We must be guided by our officers, who are guided by years of training, experience and knowledge of other such schemes elsewhere. The best local example is the improvements to Wokingham Town Centre, where despite many initial reservations, the new road scheme is seen to work very well. A major safety enhancement at California Crossroads will be the introduction of multiple raised platforms on the carriageway to reduce traffic speeds; something which very many residents have called for.

Will the work cause disruption?

Undoubtedly it will, as does any major Highways construction. All of the local Borough Councillors and the Parish Council are in constant communication with the Highways team to try and minimize the impact, but I appreciate that it is going to be a big issue for residents, at least initially. Evidence from other major road schemes suggests that after a few weeks, local traffic rebalances itself as people get used to the alternative routes and we all hope that this will be the case at California Crossroads.

Will the work affect the businesses?

Possibly in the short-term but we hope that this will be temporary. Access to the shops and other businesses will be always provided, both for customers and for deliveries. The car park at Avery Corner will remain open during phases one and two and alternative parking options are being considered. Councillors and council officers are in constant communication with the business owners to help overcome anticipated difficulties.

I'm sure that residents who value these local services will continue to do whatever they can to support them during this period.

Are people going to be annoyed by this?

Again, undoubtedly so, whilst the work is going on. When it's finished, I think that many people may well change their mind. But government, national and local, is ultimately about taking the right decisions on behalf of the community rather than just seeking short-term popularity, which is why the Borough Council have allowed the project to continue.

Will the new junction be protected from further road-works following completion? **Response by Adam Matthews, Scheme Project Manager, WBC**

WBC have submitted a section 58 restriction which, under the New Roads & Street Works Act 1991, allows a local authority to protect a street from any planned street works following any major surfacing works, excepting emergency work. The restriction comes into play at the completion of the works and lasts three years.

The scheme involves new drainage infrastructure being laid and when the carriageway is excavated the existing drainage network will be reviewed and surveyed. The drainage section for the scheme will be newly installed and where connected to the existing network, its condition will be reviewed and any remedial work required will be completed at the same time. The water supply will be surveyed when uncovered, but only altered if the pipes are in the way of the other drainage work.

Virgin Media and BT will be completing works at the junction to their assets, so the hope is the area should be free from disruption for the foreseeable future.

ARTWORK



The local schools and Parish have been involved in creating artwork featuring local heritage and nature.

- * Bespoke bollards were co-designed with Nine Mile Ride School
- * Bespoke Totems were co-designed with Gorse Ride School
- * High-quality lighting columns will be installed
- * Additional and new planting, at ground level and in hanging baskets, will be provided



CALIFORNIA CROSSROADS - CONSTRUCTION MODEL



ARCHIVE PHOTOSTORIES

CHILDRENS DRAWINGS FROM WORKSHOP



QUOTATION BY THE CHILDREN OF GORSE RIDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

One of the totems to be used at the four outer entrances to the Crossroads area marking the entrance to the new area.

The Parish has owned the red telephone-box since 2017 and it has been agreed that it will be used as an information feature with images and text of historic and current features of the Parish.

It will incorporate some of the artwork being featured in the Crossroads Project and additional bespoke artwork created through work with local schools.

Details of road closures and diversions during **Phase One** can be found on the following pages and contact details for representatives of WBC and the Project Team on **page 11**

Phase One scheduled dates:
12th February — 8th May



Poynton

Poynton's innovative Shared Space Scheme was completed in 2012.

This award winning regeneration scheme removed traffic lights and changed the lay out for what was one of the busiest junctions in Cheshire. It regenerated the main shopping street, Park Lane, and reinstated Fountain Place as the historic centre of the Town.

At its heart, Shared Space is a design concept that gives equal priority to all high street users from pedestrians, to vehicles and cyclists. With its wide pavements, slow vehicle speeds and easy crossing, Poynton offers a friendly and vibrant atmosphere for all visitors.

The 15 minute film below by Martin Cassini from Equality Streets, describes the background and outcome of the scheme, the views of local residents, and explores the implications of this ground breaking project.

[Poynton Regenerated \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

The Story

Poynton was a community in decline, divided by decades of anti-social traffic engineering, until an innovative new Active Design scheme was developed and completed to reunite and revitalise the town centre high street.

The scheme involved the regeneration of the main shopping street Park Lane and the reinstatement of Fountain Place, the historic centre of the village.

This busy intersection at the heart of the town was formerly a hostile and congested traffic space, dominated by traffic signals and road markings. These have all been replaced with an informal junction involving two inter-connected roundels.

The Solution

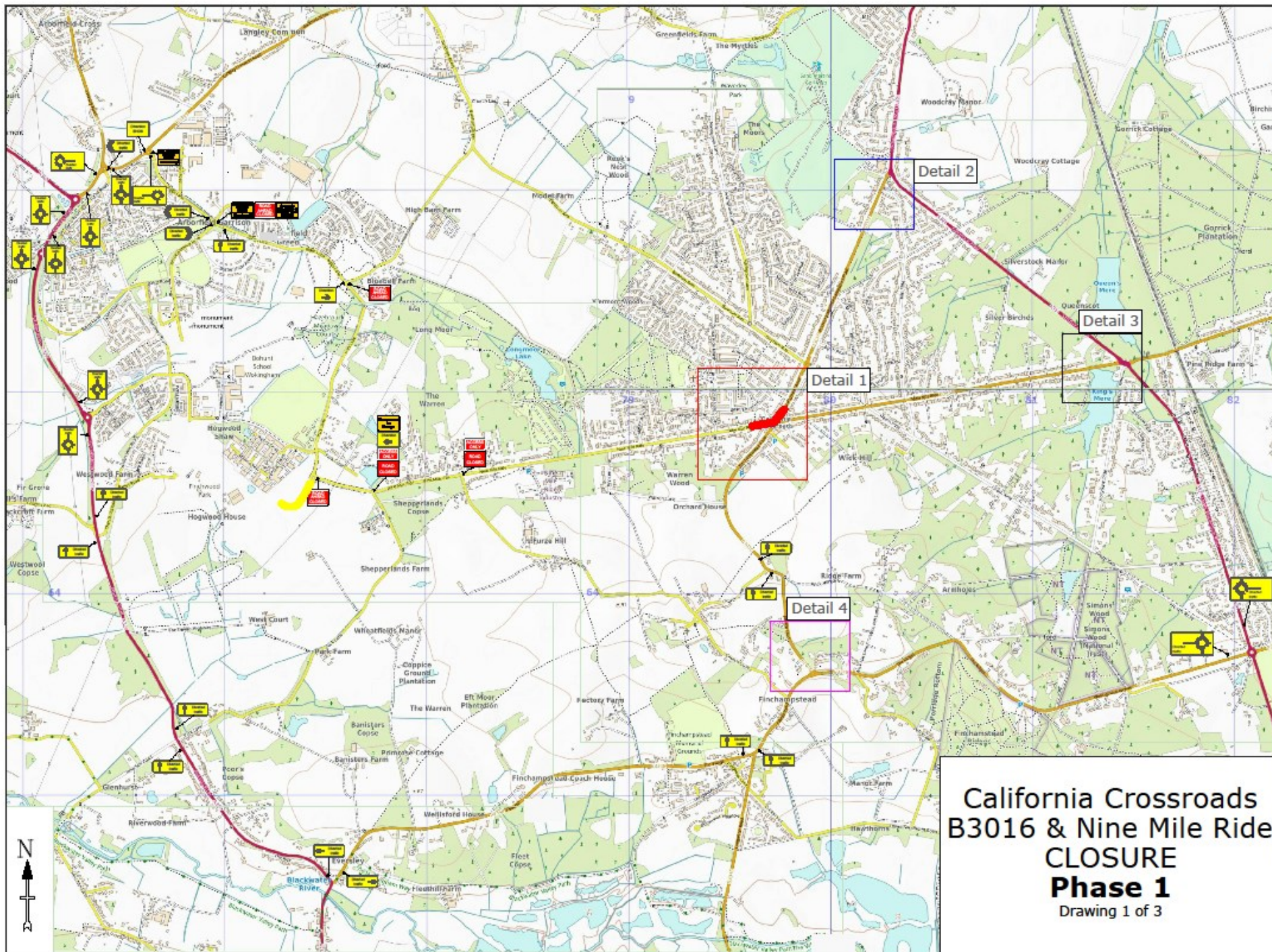
The streets have been redesigned with greatly extended 'shared space' pedestrian areas. All traffic lights have been removed, and average speeds significantly reduced to create a more responsive and civilised interaction amongst pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. There is no speed limit

The Result

Prior to the Poynton project there were on average 7 accidents taking place every year at this junction. This was reduced to zero accidents and the town has come back to life, as it attracts greater levels of pedestrian visitors and shoppers to the high street.



<https://activecheshire.org/case-studies/ben-hamilton-baillie-groundbreaking-active-design-gets-high-street-praise-poynton/>



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This layout is for installation by an NRSWA, 12A, 12B, 12D qualified engineer and may be modified to suit the conditions at the time of installation.

CLOSURE

Notes:

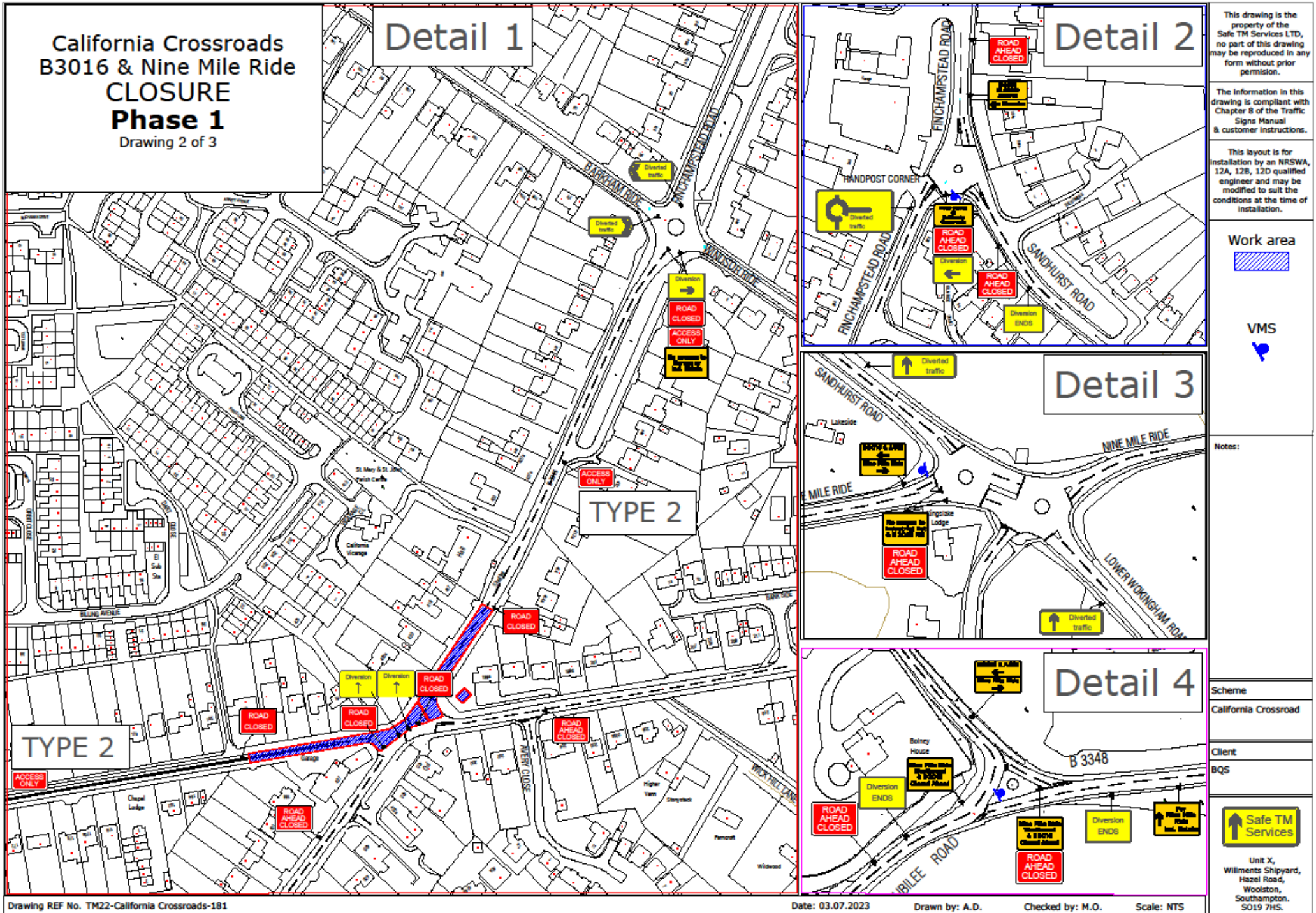
Scheme
California Crossroad

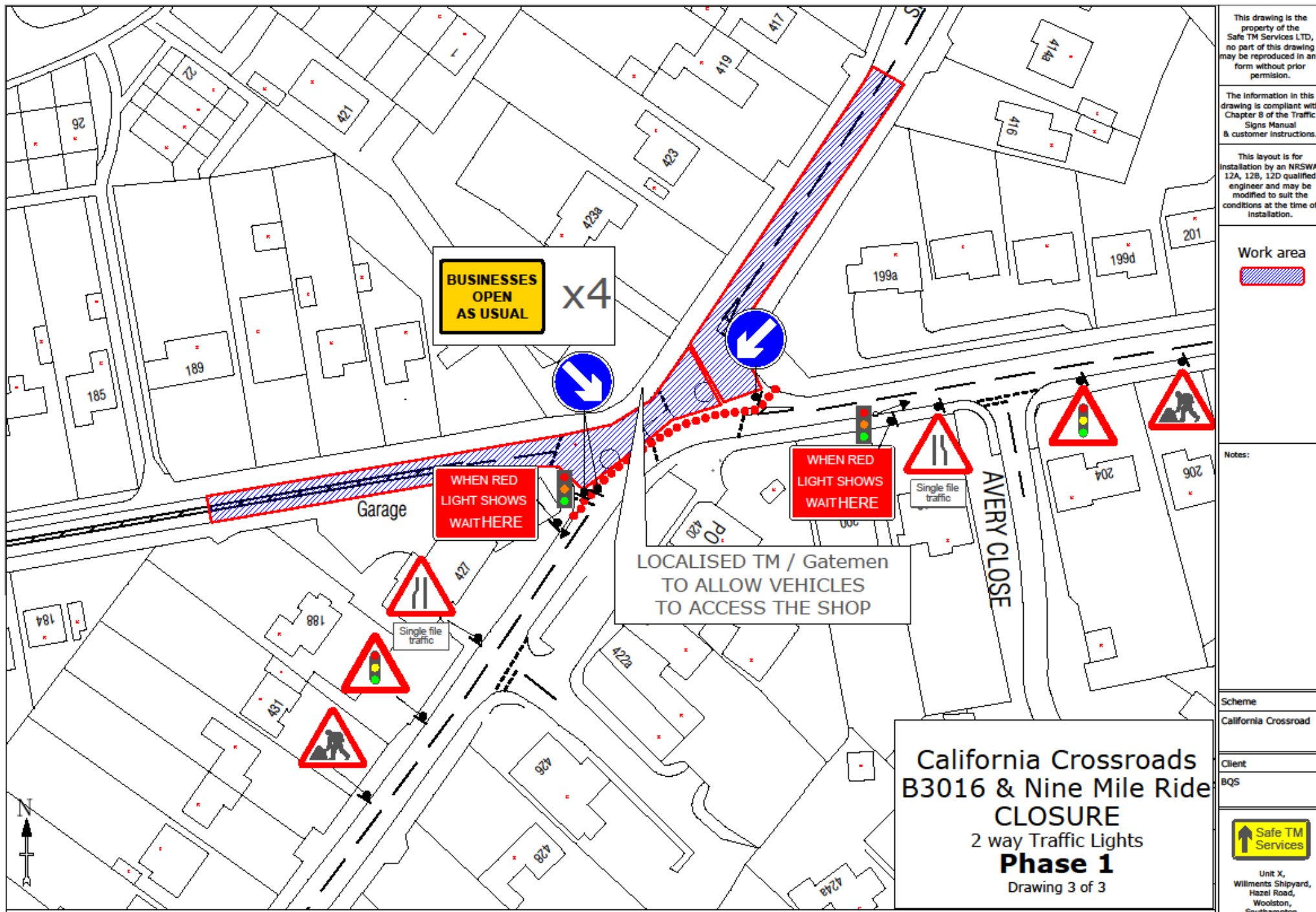
Client
BQS

California Crossroads
B3016 & Nine Mile Ride
CLOSURE
Phase 1
Drawing 1 of 3



Unit X,
Willmets Shipyard,
Hazel Road,
Woolston,
Southampton.
SO19 7HS.





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Work area

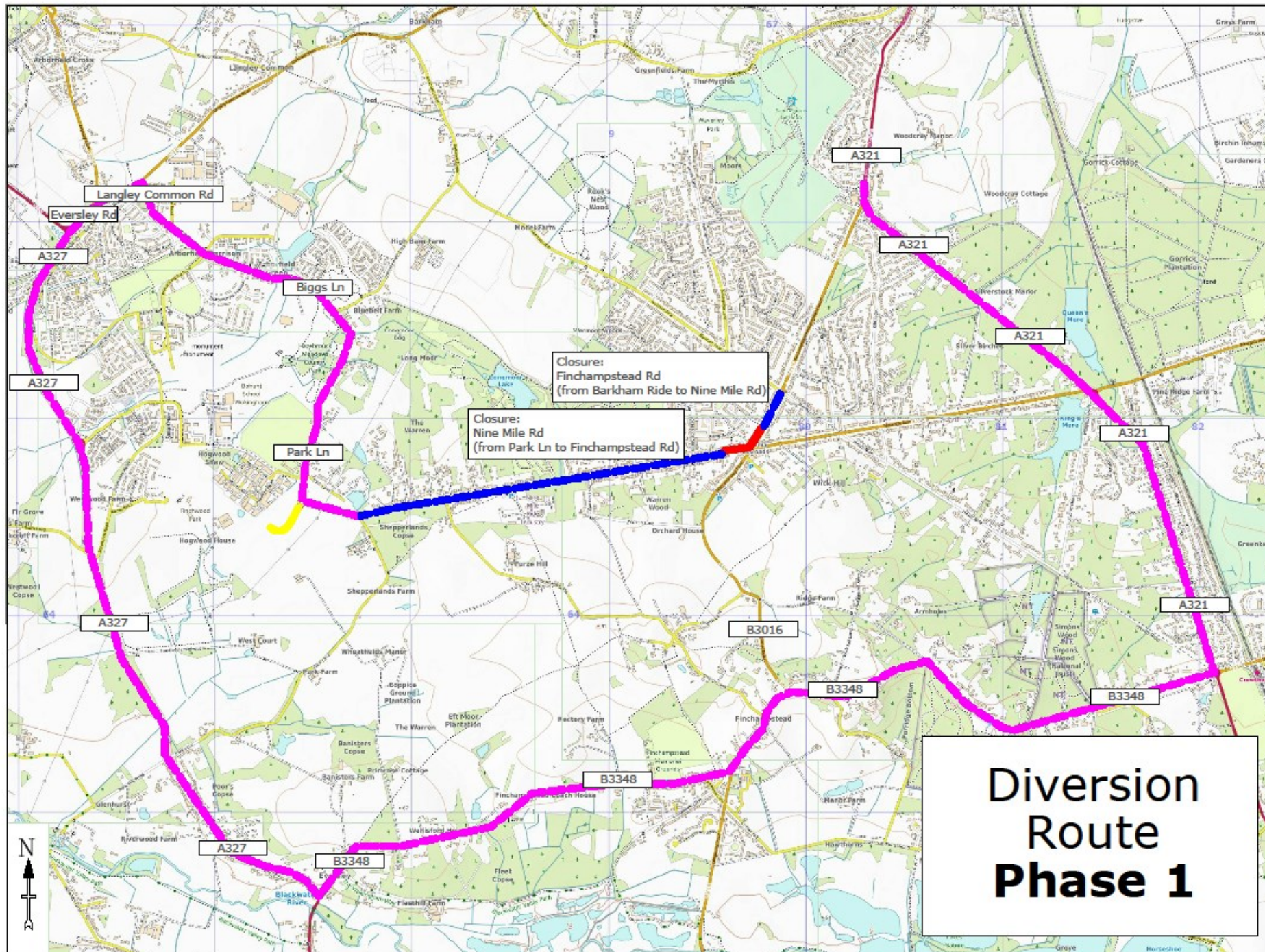
Notes:

Scheme
California Crossroad

Client
BQS

**California Crossroads
B3016 & Nine Mile Ride
CLOSURE**
2 way Traffic Lights
Phase 1
Drawing 3 of 3

Unit X,
Willmets Shipyard,
Hazel Road,
Woolston,
Southampton,
SO19 7HS.



Diversion Route Phase 1

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Notes:

Scheme
California Crossroad

Client
BQS

 Safe TM Services

Unit X,
Willments Shipyard,
Hazel Road,
Woodston,
Southampton,
SO19 7HS.



CONTACTS

One further residential letter about the project, from WBC, should be received by all residents by the end of January, or early February. We hope the information we have provided in this newsletter is useful and helpful for you. However it is important to stress this is a WBC project, and not a Finchampstead Parish Council project, so all communications should be addressed to the WBC contacts below.

All parents of pupils at our local schools should have heard through their schools details of the project. These schools agreed to distribute all the relevant construction information to you, so you are able to best plan your route to school in advance.

Both Wokingham Borough Council and BQS Management Ltd have a dedicated webpage relating to the scheme. They will update the webpage with progress reports and notifications of traffic management changes with photos and update summaries each month.

WBC Webpage: www.wokingham.gov.uk/cc

BQS Management Ltd Webpage: <https://www.bqsservices.co.uk/projects-3/californiacrossroads>

Wokingham Borough Council Contacts

- Site Project Manager – Dean Underdown

Dean will be present on site every day (not for the full duration, but able to react very quickly to day to day issues or queries)

- Scheme Project Manager – Adam Matthews Adam.Matthews@wokingham.gov.uk

Adam will be responsible for general overview of scheme progress, providing scheme updates and happy to answer any queries you may have during the works.

Wokingham Borough Council will also be sending out fortnightly newsletters from 9th February that will provide updates, progress reports and notifications of upcoming traffic management changes. You can sign up at www.wokingham.gov.uk/newsletter and select California Cross Project Update

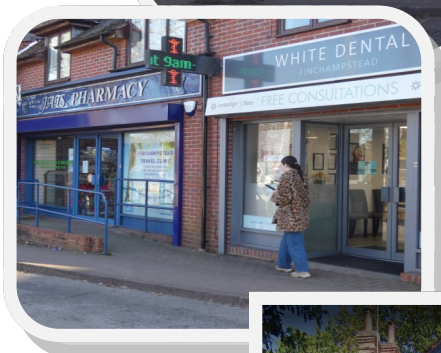
BQS Management Ltd Contact Details

- Site Supervisor – Carl Savell (07702 822936) carl@bqsmanage.co.uk

Carl will be present on site throughout the project and based within the on-site compound area situated within Avery Corner Car Park. Carl will have direct access to site issues and a direct contact for the operatives working on the site at all times.

- BQS – Dedicated Scheme Email address - calicross@bqsmanage.co.uk

Email address will be viewed by multiple BQS employees throughout the projects construction and therefore messages will be picked up very quickly and actioned to appropriate staff.



SOS



SUPPORT OUR SHOPS

We all need to support the shops, garage, pubs and restaurants during this period of reconstruction if we want to have a parade of shops at the end of the project.
Parking will be available both in front of the shops and in the car park during Phase One.



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