

Planning Reference No:	10/1146N
Application Address:	Land to the East of University Way, Crewe
Proposal:	Extension in Time Limit for the Outline Application for the Erection of Five Office Buildings with Associated Car Parking and Landscaping.
Applicant:	Pegasus Planning Group
Application Type:	Extension in time for outline permission
Grid Reference:	372628 354904
Ward:	Doddington
Earliest Determination Date:	12 th April 2010
Expiry Dated:	18 th May 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	24 th June 2010
Date Report Prepared:	30 June 2010
Constraints:	Wind Turbine consultation area

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

Impact on protected species

Impact on trees.

Potential Flood Risk

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Strategic Board because the site area is approximately 3 hectares.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site is bounded by University Way on the west and employment land to the south with further land for development to the north. The Valley Brook and Englesea Brook form the eastern site boundary. The site slopes from University Way to Englesea Brook and Valley Brook. Vehicular access from University Way has been constructed under a previous permission (P04/0478). The land was formerly owned by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and Cheshire County Council. There are no buildings on the site at present.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is an application for an extension in time to outline planning permission granted under reference P07/0017. In assessing the application the Authority should consider whether there have any material changes in circumstance since the original permission was issued, which would justify a different decision on the application. The outline permission granted consent for five office buildings associated car parking and

landscaping. The submission indicated that access and layout were to be determined as part of the outline application.

Four of the buildings will be provided end on to University Way with the remaining building being to the rear of the site. The proposed new office buildings will be designed with two wings linked by a central atrium. Buildings vary in size from 2,880 sqm floor area to 4,275 sqm with a total floor areas of 18, 580 sq m. A total of 470 car parking spaces are proposed with 15 motor cycle parking spaces and 49 cycle parking spaces.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

P04/0478 Access Approved 25th May 2004.

P06/0990 Outline application for five B1 office buildings and related works. Withdrawn 1st December 2006.

P07/0017 Outline application for five B1 office buildings with related works. Approved with condition 4th April 2007.

5. POLICIES

The development plan for this area includes the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2021 (RSS) and the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP).

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 Spatial Principles
DP4 Promote Economic Development
MCR4 South Cheshire

Local Plan Policy

E.1.1 (Existing Employment Allocations)
BE.1 (Amenity)
BE.2 (Design)
BE.3 (Access and parking)
BE.4 (Drainage Utilities and Resources)
NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)
NE.9 (Protected Species)
TRAN.9 and Appendix 8.1 (Car Parking)

Other Material Considerations

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPG13: Transport
PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

6. CONSULTATIONS

The DCLG Guidance in relation to applications to extend the time for the implementation of planning permissions states that “LPAs should take a proportionate approach to consultation. In deciding which bodies to consult,

they may wish to take into account which statutory consultees had a particular interest in the proposal or raised concerns about it at the time of the original application." Consultees for the 2007 application were the Environment Agency, Highway Authority, Natural England, United Utilities, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Sustrans. Comments were received from Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Highway Authority. Natural England was consulted in the absence of an Ecologist for Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council. Issues relating to Protected Species are now considered by the Council's Ecologist and it is therefore not considered necessary to consult Natural England. The views of the following consultees have been sought:

Strategic Highways Manager: No comments to add to those in 2007 ie no objections but require the submission approval and implementation of a travel plan for the site.

Ecology: Having read the updated bat and barn owl survey, and the revised badger survey, it is noted that there were no evidence of roosting bats, although there was some commuting along the Brook. There was no evidence of barn owl presence. Subject to safeguards protected species will not be affected by the proposed development.

Environment Agency: Withdraw an earlier objection and request conditions that the buildings be set at a minimum level of 49.79m AOD with pedestrian access at a minimum level of 49.49m AOD, the submission, approval and implementation of a scheme for a surface water regulation system, ecological surveys, a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water, water from car parking areas to be passed through oil interceptors, areas used for washing vehicles to be contained and connected only to foul sewers, and a scheme for the protection of the Valley Brook from building materials.

7. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

None received.

8. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

A Design and Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Tree Survey and Ecological Survey were submitted in 2007. The Ecological information has been updated with additional bat and barn owl surveys and a badger survey.

Design and Access Statement (*Prepared by JM Architects and dated August 2006*)

The Design and Access Statement can be summarised as follows:-

- the site is to be developed on the principles of sustainable development;
- buildings are orientated to maximise use of the south facing elevation for sunlight and to provide naturally ventilated floors around a central atrium;
- buildings will in general be 40 m apart with landscaping and car parking between units to improve air quality;
- vehicle and pedestrian movements will be separated;
- green corridors will separate buildings and other green spaces will be provided around the site to form a landscaped setting which will link to the natural habitats around the site. These will be protected;

- run off from roof areas will be collected and channelled to swales (drainage channels) to provide a sustainable drainage system carrying water via a flood meadow to Englesea Brook. Run off from parking areas will be passed through interceptors before being channelled to the Brook;
- a Travel Plan will be prepared to encourage use of public transport and alternative modes of transport other than the car;
- shower and changing facilities will be provided for staff;
- buildings will have level threshold access and be designed to minimise energy use and carbon output;
- the roof of the central area will be designed to accommodate solar panels and this will influence the orientation of the buildings;
- the illustrative layout shows a two storey section to the south of a central atrium with three storeys on the north side rising to approximately 12 m. This height includes increased floor to ceiling heights to allow natural ventilation;
- green roof areas will control heat gain and help to control storm water run off;
- rain water and "grey" water will be collected for use in flushing toilets and irrigation;
- the central atrium will provide an area for staff to meet and socialise and is essential to the principles of reducing carbon emissions, enhancing daylight and cross ventilation;
- the buildings will be designed to include a selection of sustainable materials.

Tree Survey (*Prepared by TPM Landscapes and dated October 2006*)

There is a dense tree cover along the Englesea Brook. The tree survey identifies a number of generally smaller trees along the Englesea Brook to be removed due to a poor condition (oak, alder and sycamore). Also two of the four mature oak trees located more centrally within the site are severely damaged and are to be removed.

Flood Risk Assessment (*Prepared by Gifford dated March 2007*)

- The site lies in Flood Risk Zone 3 and there are no known modelled flood levels for the stream on the site boundary;
- Based on the modelling for this submission Buildings C, D and E (those on the north and eastern parts of the site) lie within the 1 in 100 year +20% flood plain and the minimum floor levels for these plots would need to be 49.79m AOD to allow a free board in accordance with PPS25;
- Buildings C, D and E should be provided with safe and dry access and egress routes to the buildings from University Way which is located on higher ground;
- Buildings A and B are to be built on higher ground and are outside this level of flooding. Safe access and egress would therefore be provided to these buildings;
- The development includes the use of swales, underground water storage tanks and oversized pipes located under car parks to store excess water runoff in times of heavy rain. Hard surfaces should also be permeable and the development includes the use of green roofs, and rain water harvesting.
- With the use of oil interceptors the site should include sufficient water storage capacity to accommodate water from to 1 in 100 year +20% event;
- Foul drainage can to be connected to the local foul sewer network;
- A fully detailed FRA should be submitted with reserved matters applications for the site.

Ecological Survey and Protected Species Survey: (*Prepared by Paul Hill of Biota and dated June 2010*)

- The development will result in the clearance of most of the vegetation from the site but would retain the most valuable habitats, the wooded knoll and the tree cover adjacent to Valley Brook and Englesea Brook.
- Trees will only be removed where there is a risk to public health. This includes 2 larger oak trees in the central and southern end of the site;
- No evidence of bat roosts were found but bats may be present in trees to be felled. Further information submitted indicates that there was no evidence of bats roosting on site but a final check should be made of any trees immediately prior to felling to check for presence of bats;
- 14 Bat boxes should be provided on trees to be retained to compensate for the loss of habitats
- The site is isolated from ponds and offers little potential for Great Crested Newt habitats
- Development will have no impact on water voles, white clawed crayfish, and reptiles.
- The removal of trees and scrub will impact on breeding birds and this and works to the stream banks should take place in September – February to avoid nesting birds or if works are essential in the nesting season then a check for nesting birds should take place first and active nests should be protected.
- Protection/ mitigation is recommended for badgers.

9. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is allocated in the Replacement Local Plan for B1 uses and the provision of the five offices on the site accords with that allocation. PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth has been published since the grant of outline planning permission in 2007 and the use of the site for office development is supported by policies in that document.

The Design and Access statement gives great emphasis to the design and construction of the site on the principles of sustainable development. A condition was attached to the outline permission to ensure that the reserved matters applications are based on these principles. Whilst there is no single policy in the adopted Local Plan for buildings to be designed in such a way, it is strongly encouraged in PPS1 and a condition will ensure that these principles are implemented in the reserved matters approval.

Amenity

There are no residential properties close to the site. The proposed development will not adversely impact on the units constructed, or those permitted, on land adjacent to the southern site boundary.

Design

The access road is already constructed and determines the layout to some degree. The principle of four buildings side on to University Way allows for good spacing between buildings partly landscaped but also for parking. However the overall layout is relatively spacious and should be encouraged. The attention to wet areas, drainage channels around the site and wildlife links are all welcomed.

The site is on sloping ground falling away from University Way. Buildings on plots C, D and E especially will be set well below the level of the carriageway. Buildings will be designed with a modern appearance. In section, the buildings will have a northern and southern wing each 12 m wide separated by a central atrium 8 m wide. Thus each building will have an elevation to University Way 32 m wide. The east-west depth of each building will vary throughout the site from 45 m to 70 m (on the illustrative layout) according to the size of the plot and requirements of future occupiers. The southern wings will stand 8.5 m high and the northern wings 12 m with a monopitched roof over the atrium above this height.

Whilst the maximum height of the proposed buildings will exceed the height of those constructed or permitted on the land to the south of this site, the buildings on this site will be broken into three distinct elements and present much narrower frontages to the road elevation. Essentially since the buildings are required for office use rather than B2/B8 purposes this allows them to be constructed to a higher standard of design.

In addition plots have the benefit of a 10 m landscaped belt to the north and south sides of the buildings. There is also space on the site frontage for strategic planting which should be chosen to reflect that to be provided on the site frontage to the south. Similar planting should also be included in the landscape belts shown adjacent to the access road to again reflect the pattern of planting on land to the south. In this context, with the three distinct sections to each building, there are no objections to the higher elements of the buildings.

There are no close residential properties to be affected by the development and the existing planting alongside the Valley Brook and Englesea Brook and new planting around the site will ensure no adverse impact on the Green Gap/ open countryside to the east of the Brook.

Ecology

The updated ecological and protected species survey indicates that no habitats of value will be affected by the development. In addition although no bats were found roosting on the site there is potential particularly for bats to develop roosts between the survey and date of implementation. Therefore as a precaution it is recommended that a condition be attached to any permission for trees to receive a final inspection immediately prior to felling to ensure no bats are present. In addition there is a need to protect nesting birds if development takes place between February and September in any year. It is not considered necessary to include any condition for measures to protect Great Crested Newts. The site is remote from areas where Great Crested Newts are known and there is little likelihood of any being present on the site. The badger survey and updated information indicates that a sett is present and similarly a condition is required to protect badgers in the event of any changes on site between the date of survey and commencement of development. Subject to the requirements of conditions the development will not adversely impact on any protected species.

Drainage

The Flood Risk Assessment indicates that the site can be developed with adequate on site water storage facilities to control the rate of run off from the site to take account of the 1 in 100 year +20% storm event. The Environment Agency raises no objections to the submission subject to the inclusion of a number of conditions. These are the same conditions are included in the original permission. The condition in relation to the need for protected species surveys does not apply, since this information has been updated for this application for an extension in time. Other conditions will be attached to the permission.

Tree survey

Following from discussions in relation to the previous planning application it was recommended that two of the four oak trees within the site be removed and a number of other trees around the site be removed because of their poor state of health. It is accepted that some tree removal will be necessary and replacement planting will be required to compensate for this. However the wooded knoll at the junction of the Englesea Brook and Valley Brook and the tree cover along this stream will, in the main, be retained. Therefore the strong landscape feature which forms the eastern boundary to the site and the edge of the settlement boundary will be retained. In addition planting completed on the northern and southern boundaries of the site at the time University Way was constructed is now becoming established and forming habitats with wildlife value. The hedgerow planting on the site frontage provided at the time of the road construction is also becoming established. As with the original permission it is recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure that planting along the site frontage and continuing into the site along the access road be provided and use similar species to those on the site frontage on the land immediately south of this site.

Highway Matters

The site is located within walking distance of bus routes, with pedestrian and cyclist access along University Way. The access point to the site has been constructed together with a stretch of road in excess of 100m long. In any event University Way was constructed to take traffic from the development plots along it. The Strategic Highways Manager raises no objections subject to the submission of Travel Plans for each development. The car parking provision at 1 per 40 sq m is acceptable subject to controls to be exercised through a travel plan with the provision of cycle and motor cycle parking. Showers should be available in all buildings for people to use if cycling to work.

10. CONCLUSIONS

There are no objections to an extension of time for the implementation of this outline permission for a further three years. The use of the land for B1 office use complies with the allocation in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan. The development is based on the principles of

sustainable development and includes a sustainable drainage pattern, a green landscaped setting with buildings designed to maximise the use of sunlight and reduce the need for energy. The site is sustainably located in relation to public transport, walking and cycling.

There have been no material changes in circumstances since the outline permission was granted which would warrant a refusal of this application for an extension in time for the implementation of the permission.

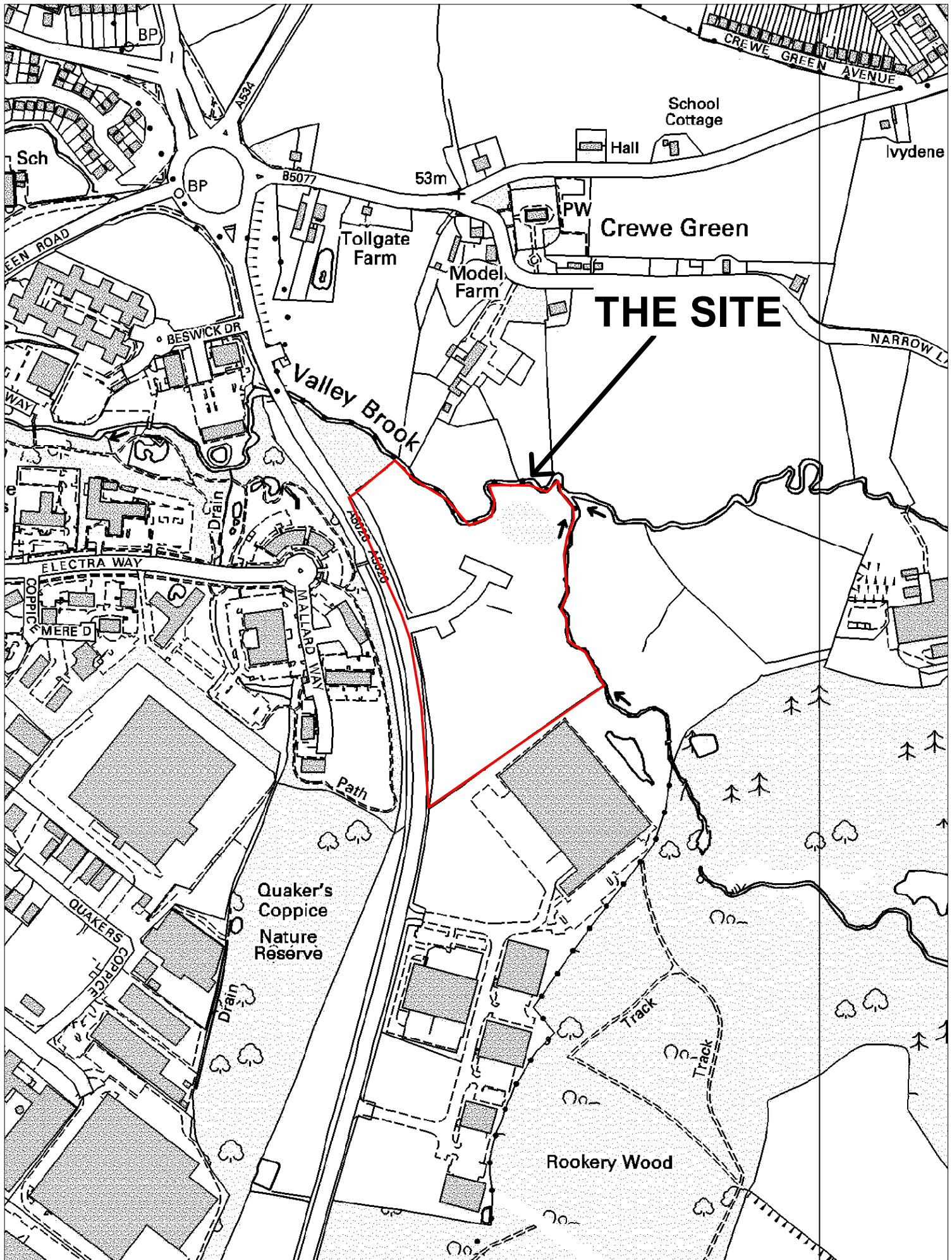
11. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-

- 1. Submission of details of layout, scale, appearance access to all individual plots and landscaping.**
- 2. Application for reserved matters to be made within 3 years of date of this permission.**
- 3. Development to be implemented within 3 years of the date of this outline permission or expiry of 2 years from final approval of the last of the reserved matters.**
- 4. All reserved matters applications to include site survey and details of proposed site and slab levels**
- 5. All reserved matters applications to include Framework Travel Plan, to be followed by a travel plan and its implementation.**
- 6. All reserved matters applications to provide development based on the all the sustainable development principles of the Design and Access Statement**
- 7. Car parking, motorised cycle parking and covered secure cycle parking for each plot, with showers in each building for use by all staff.**
- 8. Site to be used for B1 office use only**
- 9. Remedial tree works to be completed in accordance with tree survey and recommendations of ecological survey.**
- 10. Replacement planting for trees which are removed to be provided with first reserved matters application. To include details of species, size on planting, location and timetable for the provision of the tree planting.**
- 11. Details of tree protection to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 12. Landscaping scheme to be submitted with the first reserved matters planning application for the site to incorporate strategic planting to the University Way frontage and the planting on the north side of building B and south side of building D to reflect the strategic planting on Area C to the south of this site.**
- 13. Final check of trees for bats prior to tree works.**
- 14. Protection for nesting birds.**
- 15. No development within 30m of any badger sett and further survey with mitigation if necessary to ensure protection to any setts.**
- 16. Scheme for the provision of a wildlife buffer to the Valley Brook and Englesea Brook to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 17. Use of native species in landscaping of all plots.**
- 18. Minimum slab level of 49.79m AOD for all buildings.**
- 19. Pedestrian access to all buildings to be minimum of 49.49m AOD**
- 20. Scheme for surface water regulation of the site to be submitted with first reserved matters for the development, approved and implemented.**

21. Scheme for the disposal of surface and foul water drainage to be submitted approved and implemented with each plot.
22. Oil interceptors to car parks.
23. Areas used for vehicle washing to be contained and connected to foul sewer.
24. Scheme for protection of Englesea Brook and Valley Brook from contamination by building materials to be submitted approved and implemented.

LOCATION PLAN:



10/1146N - LAND TO THE EAST OF, UNIVERSITY WAY, CREWE

N.G.R. - 372,660 - 354,930

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