

Planning Reference No:	10/1588N
Application Address:	Land North West of Travelodge and South West of Retail Unit, Beswick Drive, Crewe
Proposal:	Erection of an Office Development (B1 Use Class) with Associated Landscaping, Car Parking and Access Arrangements.
Applicant:	Swansway Garages Ltd
Application Type:	Full Planning Application
Grid Reference:	372267 355153
Ward:	Crewe East
Earliest Determination Date:	29 th June 2010
Expiry Dated:	28 th July 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	9 th June 2010
Date Report Prepared:	15 th June 2010
Constraints:	Wind Turbine Development consultation area

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions.

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design
- Pedestrian link
- Highways matters and parking
- Trees and landscaping
- Ecology
- Drainage
- Contaminated land
- Sustainability
- Amenity

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Southern Planning Committee because the application seeks permission for a building with a floor area in excess of 1,000 square metres.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is an irregular shaped piece of land located to the north side of the Valley Brook in Crewe. The site is bounded on the east side by the Travelodge car park, on the west side by the car park for Booth Hall (Manchester Metropolitan University Halls of Residence) and to the north by the small parade of shops and its service area. The development will be accessed from Beswick Drive and the small road which gains access to the service area at the rear of the shops. The site falls from north to south and is currently vacant land. There are a number of trees on site include a mature Oak

located centrally within the site and other trees alongside the Valley Brook. These are included in Tree Preservation Order number 126.

The site is located within the Crewe settlement boundary and the site is allocated in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan under policy E.1.1 for B1 uses and uses required by Manchester Metropolitan University. The site is located in an area of mixed uses including the Travelodge, shops, offices, a public house, fitness centre and the halls of residence. There is no private housing adjoining to the site.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for 1,320 sq m of B1 office floor space, measured externally and includes details of landscaping, car parking and access arrangements. The building would be three storeys in height, constructed predominately in brick and tile and located towards the western side of the site. Open plan offices would be provided either side of a central glazed atrium which would include reception facilities, lift, toilets, shower, stores and plant room.

The development would include car parking in two areas to the north and east of the site, a brick walled waste/recycling store and separate covered secure cycle parking. The development would be set in a landscaped area which is based on the retention of a number of existing trees including the large mature Oak tree located centrally within the site. Additional landscaping is also to be provided. To the south of the site is a brick bridge which links the businesses on Electra Way with the shops and public house off Beswick Drive. The development would include a footpath around the eastern side of the site to link these facilities across the existing bridge. People currently walk across the vacant site to gain access to the shops and public house. The office and car parking would be enclosed by paladin fencing similar to that in use along the boundary with the university halls of residence. The footpath would be outside the fence.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

P03/0639 Outline application for mixed use development offices, public house/restaurant, hotel and access, car parking and landscaping and full application for including student accommodation. Approved 03/09/03

P06/0964 Extension of time for submission of reserved matters – condition 2 attached to permission P03/0639. Approved 16/10/06.

5. POLICIES

The development plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP).

Local Plan Policies

E.1.1. Existing Employment Allocations

BE.1 Amenity

BE.2 Design

BE.3 Access and Parking

BE.4 Drainage Utilities and Resources

BE.5 Infrastructure

TRAN.3 Pedestrians
TRAN.5 Provision for Cyclists
TRAN.9 Car Parking Standards
NE.5 Nature Conservation and Habitats
NE.9 Protected Species
NE.11 River and Canal Corridors
NE.20 Flood Prevention

Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan

Policy 11A Development and Waste Recycling.

Other Material Considerations

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPG13: Transport
PPS23: Development and Flood Risk

6. CONSULTATIONS

Strategic Highways Manager: The surrounding area suffers with habitual on street parking which can result in parked vehicles on the roundabout to the rear of the MMU building. The nearest public car park is within a mile of this site with very good bus / rail links, cycle ways and pedestrian routes. There is a proposed parking provision of only 50 spaces to cater for 90 members of staff and visitors, plus cycle storage facilities. The Highway Authority of Cheshire East Council adopted parking policy states that for B1 use, there should be 1 parking space provided for every 30m² of GFA. The proposed GFA for this site is 1229.1m² which equates to a parking provision of 40.97 spaces. The Highway Authority is happy to accept a small increase to the maximum parking standards at this location, due to high staff densities, as any increase to on street parking in and around this site will have a negative impact on the surrounding highways network. Recommend a condition to ensure that the parking is provided as per the site layout before the building is first occupied.

Environment Agency: Maintain an earlier objection to the application. The revised Flood Risk Assessment dated July 2010 and revised site layout (submitted to EA) shows that the building will be located outside the Flood Risk Zone 3 and there is therefore no requirement to demonstrate how potential flood storage loss can be mitigated within the development.

However the EA consider that the detailed topographical survey and cross sections show the building would be located too close to the top of the watercourse and restrict emergency access to the watercourse and access for maintenance. The position of the building should be revised to allow for a level access strip of at least 6m inland from the level point. (A site meeting with the developer's representative has been arranged to further define the position of the top of the river bank and the relative position of the building. More information will be given in the Update Report.)

The EA also has a responsibility to promote biodiversity along river corridors and any scheme to provide a buffer zone to the river corridor will need to include a working method statement detailing how the buffer zone will be protected during construction.

Ecology: No objections. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development. However conditions are recommended to safeguard breeding birds and for the submission of details for the location of the bat and bird nest boxes to be provided, before their installation.

Landscape Officer: The landscape scheme needs to be amended to include low level planting at the western end of the hedgerow between the retained Oak tree and the north bank of the Valley Brook to ensure the continuity of perimeter planting. Further clarification is sought in relation to the removal of the southern limb of tree T3, the fungi which is present on T10 and the location and potential retention of T21 which is dying but could be retained in the interests of wildlife rather than removed. Conditions are recommended in relation to the provision of tree protection measures; no trees, shrubs or hedges within the application area which are shown for retention to be felled without the without prior written consent; implementation of remedial tree works; implementation of the landscape scheme.

Environmental Health: Recommend a condition for the submission of a contaminated land survey with remediation should this be necessary and site completion report. Also recommend conditions relating to hours of construction, pile driving and business hours.

SUSTRANS - Welcome cycle parking for staff. The canopy should be sufficiently large to protect cycles from the weather. Even for a small site such as this we believe travel planning would be useful with targets and regular reviewing.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service: Offer comments in relation to access to the site, water supplies, means of escape and recommend the inclusion of an automatic water suppression system. The Service asks that the letter be forwarded to the applicant for information.

7. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

None received at the time of writing this report.

8. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Design and Access Statement (*prepared by Pullman Architects and dated April 2010*)

- The proposal is for a 3 storey office building which will reflect the scale and design of other buildings in the locality;
- The company has currently outgrown their existing office accommodation in Crewe and is looking to locate their headquarters on this site whilst allowing space for future expansion;
- The building is aligned with the Travelodge and the east – west axis of the development allows the office to face the site access;
- The layout allows the retention of existing natural landscape and topography
- The accommodation includes office space, meeting rooms and services;
- The development also includes facilities for the storage of waste and recycling where appropriate;
- A cycle store is also proposed with space for 8 bicycles;
- The development allows the retention of the Oak tree within the site

- The building will have a similar scale and mass to existing buildings in the area and will sit comfortably between the MMU halls of residence and the Travelodge;
- The north elevation has a full height atrium located centrally within the front elevation and brick built elevations around this, punched with individual windows to provide a human scale;
- Landscaping includes retention of existing trees and new planting;
- The pallet of materials will reflect buildings around the site and the atrium will contrast with the brick elevations.
- In detail the building includes a plinth at ground level, brick elevations and a clerestorey band of glazing at eaves level. The main elements of the facade are broken up with contrasting stone bands and brick coursing.
- The hipped roof will be formed from interlocking tiles.
- Boundary treatment will be 1.8m high paladin fencing which will match that along the boundary of the site with Booth Hall (MMU halls of residence)
- A number of mechanical and electrical installations will be considered to reduce the energy needs of the development. These include- CIBSE Design Guides and related publications, Building Regulations Part L2, High efficiency condensing boilers and water heaters, energy efficiency control systems, VRF type heating and cooling systems, PIRs to operate ventilation systems, PIRs for urinal water saving flush control vales and self closing taps, light fittings and controls, and timers for external lighting. The exact measures have not yet been determined but can be subject to further discussions with the Local Planning Authority.

Supporting Statement prepared by HOW Planning dated April 2010

- The proposed office accommodation is for 1,229 sq m of office space measured internally or 1,320 sq m measured externally;
- The applicant is Swansway Garages Ltd and EMaC Ltd is a subsidiary of the Swansway Group. This building is required for their headquarters. The company presently have about 50 staff and are looking to expand to about 90 persons;
- The site has been cleared. There is currently a brick bridge across the Valley Brook and an informal path has been created through the site by people linking offices on Electra Way with the shops on Beswick Drive. The application proposes to provide a footpath for this route around the eastern end of the development.
- Access will be from the roundabout at Beswick Drive which is located off University Way.
- Two areas of car parking are proposed one on the north of the site and one on the east providing a total of 52 car parking spaces.
- Covered secure parking for 8 cycles will be provided.

Transport Statement (*prepared by Shepherd Gilmour Infrastructure Ltd dated April 2010.*)

- The site is located 1.5km east of Crewe town centre
- Access will be from the four arm roundabout on Beswick Drive which is located off University Way.
- There are 2.7m wide segregated footways with street lighting on Beswick Drive which has no parking restrictions.
- A three metre wide combined footway and cycle way is provided on the north bound side of University Way with a 2m wide pedestrian footway on the south bound side.
- There are two bus stops on Crewe Green Road and another bus stop on Crewe Road all of which are about 5 minutes walk from the site using footways. These routes have

buses to Crewe, Hanley, Biddulph, Sandbach, Congleton, Macclesfield, Winsford and Northwich. Routes number 20 (Crewe to Hanley via Tunstall and Alsager), 37 (Crewe to Sandbach, Winsford and Northwich) and 38 (Crewe to Sandbach, Congleton and Macclesfield) are regular services and include buses from 06:00 hours until 23:00 hours on weekdays. There is also a Sunday service.

- The railway station is 1.4km away and facilities include cycle parking, a 500 space car park, and a ticket office open from 05:30 to 20:30 hours. Local trains link to Sandbach, Holmes Chapel and Winsford and are more frequent during peak hours, with less frequent trains to Congleton and Nantwich. There are also services to Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham New Street and Chester.

- There are cycle links in the area including along University Way and RR74 links from near Wrenbury to Sandbach through Crewe using Crewe Road and Crewe Green Road. These routes can be combined with a number of local cycle routes to give good access to the site from Crewe and surrounding areas.

- Pedestrian footways in the locality are well lit and junctions at the roundabout on the north end of University Way and elsewhere are provided with pedestrian crossing points.

- The site is well located therefore for access by a choice of public transport, walking and cycling.

- A survey of existing staff showed that 36.8% live in Crewe and 7.9% in Nantwich with 60% of all staff living in areas which would potentially access the site using bus services.

- Currently some 75% of staff drive to work and 6.7% are passengers in a car.

- The existing offices for the company are located in Crewe therefore the traffic generated will not be new traffic but existing trips. Using information from the TRICS database it is demonstrated that the offices will generate 29 and 30 two way trips in the morning and evening peak periods respectively. These are considered to be existing trips since the company already operates within Crewe but if they were new trips this would be only a 3.2% and 3.1% increase in two-way base level flows on University Way.

- 52 car parking spaces are to be provided including 2 mobility impaired spaces which is below the level of maximum parking required by the Borough Local Plan and will meet the needs of the site.

- Swept path analysis shows that the largest size of refuse vehicle available in the UK will be able to turn within the site

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Protected Species Survey (*prepared by Biota and dated April 2010*)

- The survey area extends for 100m outside of the development site boundary.

- There are no protected habitats on site.

- There was no evidence of bats roosting at the site. An endoscope was used to inspect the bridge on the south side of the site. A dusk survey was completed using a bat detector and this did not show bats using any of the trees.

- There was no evidence of Water Voles at the time of survey although it was noted that there had been evidence in the 2000 survey but not in later surveys in 2003 and 2006.

- There was no evidence of White Clawed Crayfish. The brook here is very silty and white clawed crayfish prefer a stoney water course.

- Later information submitted confirmed there are no ponds containing Great Crested Newts within the vicinity of the site.

- The development will not therefore have any detrimental impact on protected species however the use of bat boxes on retained trees and bird nest boxes for swifts on the building are recommended.

- The removal of Himalayan Balsam and coppicing of the Crack Willow together with the provision of bird and bat boxes will have a positive contribution to biodiversity.

Flood Risk Assessment (*prepared by Shepherd Gilmour Infrastructure Ltd and dated April 2010*)

- The site is a Greenfield site located in Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3.
- Discharge rates of 5 litres per second will be applied to the site.
- In order to achieve the requirement that development should not worsen flooding elsewhere it is proposed that the drainage system should adopt sustainable drainage measures which might include harvesting and reuse of rain water, open attenuation or the use of oversized pipes, or permeable paving/ infiltration system.
- The design of the surface water system will include an allowance of 15% for climate change allowances.
- The finished floor level of the proposed building will be set at 48.4m AOD which is above the worst case scenario of 1 in 100 year flood level which would set the building at 47.0m AOD.
- At this level it is not considered that the building would be at risk from fluvial flooding, ground water flooding or any overland flow from the nearby sewers in times of storm.
- A detailed site drainage plan should be prepared in accordance with these principles.

Tree Survey, Assessment, Landscape Design and Maintenance (*prepared by Land Lizard and dated April 2010*)

- Identifies 29 trees on the site of which a number are considered unworthy of retention.
- Propose the retention of the large mature Oak located centrally within the site and the small Oak next to it as a focal point within the development site.
- Recommend remediation to the retained trees, in the case of those along the Valley Brook this includes coppicing.
- A number of trees alongside the Valley Brook are however recommended for removal and replacement.
- A landscaping scheme is also proposed for the development site including tree planting, a native hedgerow with 6 species to site boundaries with shrub and herbaceous planting at the site entrance and around the building. A maintenance schedule is also attached.
- Tree Protection measures are also detailed.

Geo-Environmental Desk Study Preliminary Risk Assessment (*prepared by Shepherd Gilmour Infrastructure Ltd dated April 2010*)

- There is potential for contaminants (heavy metals, organic and inorganic compounds) as well as asbestos to be present which might have arisen due to historical uses of the site.
- There is potential for the generation of harmful ground gases and volatiles to be present due to the underlying geology, imported fill and from filling in a former mill pond on the site.
- A site specific contamination risk assessment should be completed.

9. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is part of the land allocated under policy E.1.1 in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan for B1 uses and any use required in association with Manchester Metropolitan University. The application site was included within the 2003 application (P03/0639) which was a hybrid application and sought outline permission for B1 offices and other uses as well as seeking full permission for the student accommodation. Subsequently an application to extend the time for the submission of the reserved matters under the outline permission was allowed (P06/0964). Both permissions have now lapsed. Nevertheless because of the allocation in the local plan there are no objections to the proposed application in principle subject to compliance with other policy requirements.

It is also noted that the site is well served by public transport, within walking distance of Crewe Railway Station and has good walking and cycle linkages to the town centre and residential areas. The development of the site is therefore in accordance with Government guidance to locate new development in areas well served by public transport which offer a choice of means of access.

Design

The building would be located towards the western side of the site in a manner which would allow for the retention of trees along the Valley Brook and would not interfere with the mature Oak tree located within the site. The approach to the site is via the service area at the rear of the shops. There is no other vehicular approach. The site would be laid out to provide for an entrance feature with a named plaque "Meadow Bridge" and tree planting to frame views of the front of the building. In addition the hedgerow to be provided around the site would soften the impact of other buildings and car parks as it matures.

The boundary fencing would match the existing fencing on the western boundary with Booth Hall, the MMU halls of residence. In most places the boundary hedge would be located inside the fence but at the site entrance the boundary fencing would be set back behind landscaping. This would visually link with the planting around the side of the shops and the halls of residence.

The three storey building would be set below the level of the halls of residence and the ridge of the roof would not exceed the height of the halls. Whilst the atrium would face the entrance to the site, the plinth, glazed clerestorey and brick detailing would be present on all elevations so that the building would not have a "rear elevation". Further the pattern of fenestration, including the clerestorey, would be repeated on all elevations. Car parking would be divided into two areas which reduces the mass of hard surfacing at the site. The landscape scheme would provide planting throughout the site to soften the appearance of the development and form a suitable edge to the Valley Brook and Greenway to the south of the site. A condition should be imposed on any permission to ensure the provision of reveals to windows and doors which will ensure improved detailing in the design of the building.

The brick built bin store and separate cycle parking would be located adjacent to the northern car park and close to the brick substation which is adjacent to the application site and serves the halls of residence.

It is considered that the design of the building will provide a high quality building which addresses both the site entrance and also looks over the Valley Brook. The size, scale, form and design of the building would sit comfortably within the existing development and the landscaped setting would both enhance the appearance of the site and also biodiversity, as explained later.

Pedestrian Link

The application site includes the provision of a footpath to link the footbridge across the Valley Brook to the shops in the form of a 2m wide tarmac path, which would ensure that the unauthorised route used by people between the shops and Electra Way is relocated within the overall site. The implementation of this path meets requirements of policy TRAN.3 to create pedestrian routes through employment areas. The path would however be located outside the boundary fencing, but still within the application area to ensure security for the offices. A hedge would be provided inside the fencing with grassed areas and existing trees retained on the bank of the Valley Brook on the opposite side of the footpath.

A condition is recommended for the submission of details of the construction of the footpath to be submitted, approved and implemented. This will ensure an appropriate construction and finish to the tarmac surfacing and ensure a “no dig” construction to protect tree roots. Similarly a condition is also recommended for a scheme to be submitted for the refurbishment of the bridge over the Valley Brook. However the applicant is not aware of the ownership of this land. The application has been submitted with Certificate D confirming that the ownership of part of the site is unknown. It may be that the riparian owners (Swansway and Cheshire East Council) own the north and south sides of the bridge respectively. The details of the improvements to the bridge would take the form of resurfacing work, providing upstands/ rails/ barriers to the sides and repairs to the brickwork. It will be necessary to liaise further with the Council over these issues bearing in mind that the Council owns the southern bank of the Valley Brook. In this case in order not to delay the commencement of work on site it is recommended that the scheme for the refurbishment works to the bridge should be submitted, approved and implemented prior to the first occupation of the offices. However the applicant has also expressed concern that should an unknown landowner of the bridge come forward, they could cause delay or prevent implementation of the work. Whilst the applicant is prepared to complete the refurbishment of the bridge he does not wish that the requirement to complete these works should delay the opening of the offices which are urgently required. It is therefore recommended that the condition in relation to the implementation of the refurbishment works to the bridge should include a clause to allow that in the event of land ownership issues arising with a third party landowner (other than the Council and the applicant) which prevent the implementation of the works to the bridge, provided written evidence is submitted to the Local Planning Authority and accepted in writing, it should be agreed that the requirement to implement the works may be waived. The delivery of the pedestrian route would improve pedestrian links in the area.

Highway Matters and Parking

The location of the site and distances to bus stops, the railway station, the cycle / pedestrian links are explained in the applicant's supporting information and show that the site is in a sustainable location.

The site is accessed via Beswick Drive and the short access road which serves the rear of the shops. It is unlikely that in this location away from the junction of Beswick Drive and University Way the additional traffic that would be generated by the development would cause problems on University Way, bearing in mind that there are other areas close to this site which have still to be developed in accordance with the allocation in the Local Plan and which were originally included in the 2003 outline permission for the development.

The application proposes 52 car parking space including two spaces for persons with limited mobility. This equates to the standards in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan which according to policy TRAN.9 are to be used as maximum standards.

There is no service area as such proposed within the layout and it is recommended that a condition be attached to any permission to ensure that the site is only used for B1 office development only and for no other purpose including Research and Development and light industrial uses which are also B1 uses. This is to enable the Authority to exercise control over development and ensure that there is adequate servicing and parking for any other uses particularly since additional areas of hardstanding could be detrimental to the long term retention of protected trees on the site as well as adversely impacting on the visual amenity of the Valley Brook Greenway.

Sustrans request the submission of a Travel Plan. However the proposed floor area of this development is well below the minimum standard at which a Travel Plan is required under PPG13 and no grounds for the special justification of a Travel Plan have been presented. A covered secure cycle stand with parking for 8 cycles is proposed. This is a typical convex curved roof structure covering metal hoops and is the standard type of cycle parking facility seen at other sites in this area. A condition should also be attached to ensure the provision of the cycle parking and for the provision of showers in the building to ensure that anyone cycling to work has access to a shower.

Trees and Landscaping

There is currently public access along the south side of the Valley Brook through the Greenway and this site is therefore visible to pedestrians using that footpath network.

The site includes trees protected by Tree Preservation Order number 126. The trees on the site are protected as an Area of trees rather than individually. Many of the trees originally in the TPO have been cleared previously because they were in a poor condition. Since the trees to be retained are alongside the Valley Brook and the building is to be sited on the flatter land within the central part of the site the tree protection measures can be provided without conflict with the construction of the building. The large mature Oak tree which is located centrally in the site is to be retained together with the smaller Oak close to it. These are located to the east of the site for the office building and suitable protection measures can be provided around these trees without interfering with construction. The larger tree has a life expectancy of 20-40 years according to the Tree Survey. It would form a focal point for the development site being located between the access from Beswick Drive and the pedestrian bridge over the Valley Brook. Once it reaches the end of its natural life the younger tree would be more established and able to take over in this role.

Five trees are to be removed because they are either dead or in a poor condition. This includes one Sycamore which is also to be removed to allow the retention of the other

natives in the group. There are seven Crack Willow and Alder alongside the Valley Brook where the recommended works include the removal of broken limbs and the requirement to monitor for stability.

The applicant's agent has confirmed that T3 a Crack Willow would be retained. T10 another Crack Willow will be coppiced but because of fungi present the resultant materials would be removed off site. T21 another Crack Willow would be cleared and new planting would take place.

There are no objections to these works to trees which are the subject of the Tree Preservation Order since they would prolong the life of the trees as a whole, promote biodiversity of the site and allow the development to be provided in a landscaped setting.

The proposed landscaping includes the provision of 25 new trees (mainly native) all with value to wildlife as well as providing appropriate trees for use in landscaping the development. Hedging would be located inside the boundary fencing adjacent to the footpath route to be provided to link the bridge across the Valley Brook and the shops. The hedgerow would include six native species which would benefit wildlife and form a habitat link from the Valley Brook to the north side of the site. The landscape officer has requested an extension to this hedgerow which has been terminated to allow natural surveillance of the footpath route and this has been agreed. The condition in relation to the landscape scheme will need to be revised to take account of this additional planting.

Car parking areas would be designed to allow rain water to run off into the planting areas. The grassed areas would be sown with wildflower mixes and damp areas created to collect water in times of rain. These areas would be sown with damp ground wildflower mix and in times of heavy rain overflow by a rill to the Valley Brook.

A programme to clear the Himalayan Balsam from the site would take place and allow the development of native grasses with wildflowers.

At the site entrance the ground would be raised to allow the formation of a vertical face for the name "Meadow Bridge". Tree planting would be used at this point to frame the office building. Formal shrub beds would be provided at the site entrance and also around the office building. The landscape scheme is submitted with a five year maintenance schedule.

Alterations to the General Permitted Development Order in 2010 allow for office buildings to be extended by 50 square metres or 25% of their floor space whichever is the lesser and the provision of hard standings within the curtilage. In view of the proximity of the building to the trees which are the subject of the Tree Preservation Order it is recommended that the permitted development rights are removed to ensure that future extensions and hardstandings do not adversely impact on protected trees.

It is considered that the retention of the trees and the removal of other trees with their replacement would provide a landscaped setting which would enhance this area adjacent to the Valley Brook both in terms of a landscaped setting and also in terms of promoting biodiversity.

Ecology

No protected species or protected habitats were found on the site. Day time and evening surveys included the bridge over the Valley Brook (to check for the emergence of bats) but no bats were found. The protected species survey recommends the removal of Himalayan Balsam from the site. The survey makes recommendations regarding specific bird nest boxes and bat boxes to be provided. Conditions can be attached to any permission for the submission of details to indicate where the proposed bat and bird nest boxes are to be located and the implementation of these measures. The coppicing of the trees adjacent to the Valley Brook would ensure their retention and the stability of the banks and their continued retention to support wildlife in the locality. Some of these trees have already been coppiced previously and this would therefore continue the practice. These measures would collectively enhance the biodiversity of the area.

Drainage

A Flood Risk Assessment is submitted. The Environment Agency initially objected to the application and following the submission of a further Flood Risk Assessment to the Environment Agency they withdrew their objection in relation to the loss of the flood plain. They do however maintain their objection to the position of the building relative to the top of the bank. It appears that the Environment Agency and the developer's representative have different opinions as to exactly what constitutes the top of the bank and a site meeting has been set up to consider this further. The written response from the Environment Agency indicates that they require a clear zone of 6m from the top of the river bank to the building to allow access for emergency purposes and general maintenance. The outcome of this meeting will be reported to the Committee in the Updates Report.

The submission demonstrates that the site can be appropriately drained using sustainable drainage techniques so as to avoid increasing the risk of flooding at the site or down stream as a result of the proposed development. A condition should be attached to any permission for the submission and approval of a surface water regulation system and the implementation of the works. In the event that the above issue in relation to the clearance zone between the top of the bank and the building is resolved the Agency also request a condition for a scheme for working method statement to explain how the buffer zone will be protected during construction.

Contaminated Land

The Desk Assessment notes the potential for contaminants to be present largely as a result of previous activities on the site. A condition can be attached to any permission for the completion of a contaminated land survey and the submission of the results to the Local Planning Authority. In the event that contaminants are found then remediation will be required.

Sustainability

The site is well located to allow access by a choice of means of transport including public transport with a number of bus routes serving the site. The site is also within walking distance of Crewe railway station and has good links for access by cycling and walking to the town centre and thence to residential areas. The site is therefore in a sustainable location. This report also demonstrates that the site would be landscaped and a

sustainable drainage scheme would be developed to ensure that the site is drained in a sustainable manner, including the use of rain water for watering planted areas. Although located within a flood risk zone the development would be sited at a level to avoid any danger of risk from flooding. The proposed works to retained trees and additional planting together with the provision of bat and bird nest boxes would ensure the improved biodiversity of the site.

In terms of measures to be used to ensure the efficient use of energy within the building, the application proposes a list of measures to promote efficient use of energy but these have not been worked through in detail. It is recommended that a condition be attached to any permission for a scheme of measures to ensure energy efficiency within the development to be submitted, approved and implemented.

Amenity

There are no dwelling houses close to the site. The university halls of residence are adjacent to the site. However bearing in mind the presence of the shops, public house and student accommodation and the principle that an office development is considered appropriate to a residential area it is not considered necessary to condition hours of operation. It is in any event recommended earlier in this report that the development should be subject to a condition limiting future use to B1 offices only.

The Environmental Health Officer recommends conditions for details of the hours of construction and the hours for pile driving (if required) to be submitted and agreed. The Circular advising on the use of planning conditions states that conditions should only be imposed if they are necessary. Bearing in mind the location of the site it is not considered necessary to require details of the hours of construction to be approved. However it is understood that pile driving can cause problems of vibration for residents who are located further from the site and in this case a pile driving condition is recommended.

Other Matters

The comments of the Fire and Rescue Service should be forwarded as an informative to the applicant.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The site is allocated for employment uses in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan and the proposed development complies with policies for such a use. The development would provide a three storey office building constructed in brick and tile within a landscaped setting and an appropriate level of car parking. The building would be of an appropriate size, scale and design for this location. The works to trees on the site which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order would ensure the retention of trees within the development and the replacement of those to be removed with new tree planting. The proposed development includes measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site and would include a pedestrian link across the Valley Brook to the employment sites on Electra Way. The proposed development includes an appropriate level of car parking for the offices as well as cycle parking.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Subject to addressing the concerns of the Environment Agency APPROVE with the following conditions:-

- 1. Commence development within 3 years.**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 4. No trees shown to be retained in the Tree Survey, Assessment, Landscape Design and Management document shall be removed from the site without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.**
- 5. Surface materials to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 6. Implementation of tree protection measures prior to the commencement of development and any site works, as detailed in the Tree Survey, Assessment, Landscape Design and Management prior to the occupation of the development.**
- 7. Implementation of the remedial works to trees including coppicing and work to remove Himalayan Balsam as detailed in the Tree Survey, Assessment, Landscape Design and Management prior to the occupation of the development except that T3 (Crack willow) to be retained .**
- 8. Before development commences details of a revision to the submitted landscape scheme to be submitted and approved in writing for the provision of the perimeter planting on the southern side of the site. Implementation of revised landscape scheme as detailed in the Tree Survey, Assessment, Landscape Design and Management.**
- 9. Maintenance and management of landscaping as detailed in the Tree Survey, Assessment, Landscape Design and Management**
- 10. No change of levels around the retained trees.**
- 11. Boundary treatment to match that on the existing western boundary, to be provided.**
- 12. Withdraw permitted development rights for other means of enclosure.**
- 13. Surface Water Regulation scheme to be submitted approved and implemented based on the Flood Risk Assessment.**
- 14. Building to be set at specified level (still to be agreed through FRA) unless otherwise first agreed in writing.**
- 15. Contaminated land survey to be submitted and if necessary, remediation measures with site completion report when mitigation implemented.**
- 16. Details of pile driving if required to be submitted, agreed and implemented.**
- 17. Details of location of bat boxes and their provision.**
- 18. Details of the location of bird nest boxes and their provision.**
- 19. Details of waste recycling facilities to be submitted, approved and implemented. Provision of bin store and waste recycling facilities in accordance with submitted details.**
- 20. Provision of cycle store.**
- 21. Provision of showers to be available for use by all staff.**
- 22. Provision of car parking**
- 23. Scheme to be submitted and approved for the provision of energy saving measures in the design of the building, its operation and implementation of the measures.**
- 24. Details of the construction of the tarmac pedestrian link within the application site (which links the shops and the development off Electra Way across the Valley Brook) to be submitted and approved before development commences. This shall include “no dig” construction where the path falls within Tree Root**

Protection Areas as identified within the Tree Survey, Assessment and Landscape Design and Management document. The pedestrian route to be provided before the offices are first brought into use and thereafter retained.

25. Scheme for the maintenance of the pedestrian link to the shops to be submitted, approved before the pedestrian link is provided and implemented.
26. Scheme for works to the bridge across the Valley Brook to be submitted, approved and implemented before the building is first occupied. In the event that third party land ownership issues (outside the control of the Council and the developer) prevent implementation of the scheme evidence of the explanation for the non-implementation shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority, which upon the receipt of satisfactory evidence, shall agree in writing to the non-implemented.
27. Scheme for maintenance of the bridge.
28. Use for B1 office development only and no other purpose.
29. Withdraw permitted development rights for extensions, alterations and hardstandings for offices.
30. A scheme for working method statement to explain how the buffer zone to the Valley Brook will be protected during construction to be submitted before development commences, approved and implemented.

LOCATION PLAN: Location Plan: Cheshire East Council Licence No. 100049045

