



## Development Control Committee

**Monday, 12 February 2007 6.30 p.m.  
Civic Suite, Civic Suite, Town Hall,  
Runcorn**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David W. R." or a similar variation.

**Chief Executive**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Councillor Paul Nolan (Chairman)</b>
<b>Councillor Dave Thompson (Vice-Chairman)</b>
<b>Councillor Sue Blackmore</b>
<b>Councillor Ron Hignett</b>
<b>Councillor Keith Morley</b>
<b>Councillor Dave Leadbetter</b>
<b>Councillor Shaun Osborne</b>
<b>Councillor Rob Polhill</b>
<b>Councillor Colin Rowan</b>
<b>Councillor Tim Sly</b>
<b>Councillor Ian Whittaker</b>

**Please contact Michelle Simpson on 0151 424 2061 Ext. 1126 or  
[michelle.simpson@halton.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.simpson@halton.gov.uk) for further information.  
The next meeting of the Committee is on Wednesday, 14 March 2007**

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	<b>1 - 10</b>
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached, and (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members) to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
<b>3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE</b>	<b>11 - 40</b>
<b>4. MATTER RELATING TO ADJOINING AUTHORITY CONSULTATION</b>	<b>41 - 46</b>
<b>5. MATTER RELATING TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER</b>	<b>47 - 49</b>
<b>6. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</b>	<b>50</b>

*In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.*

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Development Control Committee on Wednesday, 17 January 2007  
at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Nolan (Chairman), Thompson (Vice-Chairman), Blackmore, Hignett, Morley, Leadbetter, Osborne, Polhill, Sly and Whittaker

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Rowan

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: P Baragwanath, L. Beard, L Bolton, J. Farmer, A. Plant, P. Shearer, M. Simpson, J. Tully, W. Watson and P. Watts

Also in attendance: (none)

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

	<i>Action</i>
DEV44 MINUTES	<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2006 having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>
DEV45 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE	<p>The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties made the decisions described.</p>
DEV46 - PLAN NO. 06/00809/FUL - PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 50 NO. ONE AND TWO BED APARTMENTS IN 3 NO. THREE AND FOUR STOREY BLOCKS TO THE LAND AT CHAPEL GATE (NAZARETH HOUSE), ST MICHAELS ROAD, WIDNES.	<p>The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site. It was noted that one letter of representation had been received from an adjoining resident details of which were outlined in the report.</p>

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the following:

A) The applicant entering into a legal agreement in relation to the payment of a commuted sum for the provision and / or improvement of off-site open space.

Strategic Director  
- Environment

B) Conditions relating to the following:

1. Condition specifying amended plans (BE1)
2. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
3. Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of both hard and soft landscaping to include tree planting. (BE2)
4. Boundary treatments including retaining walls to be submitted and approved in writing (BE2)
5. Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing and used. (BE1)
6. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
7. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
8. Agreement and implementation of cycle parking provision (TP6)
9. Submission and agreement of finished floor and site levels. (BE1)
10. Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)
11. Five conditions relating to tree protection during construction (BE1)

C) That if the legal agreement is not executed within a reasonable period of time authority be delegated to the Operational Director- Environmental and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman to refuse the application on the grounds that it fails to comply with UDP Policy S25 Planning Obligations.

Strategic Director  
- Environment

DEV47 - PLAN NO. 06/00848/HBCFUL - PROPOSED REDUCTION IN LEVEL OF LANDSCAPED MOUND TO SURROUNDING GROUND FLOOR LEVEL AT THE BRINDLEY ARTS CENTRE, HIGH STREET RUNCORN.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect

of the site. The Environment Agency and Council's Environmental Health Officers had confirmed that they had no objections subject to the conditions which required that all works were carried out in accordance with the submitted reports.

The Committee considered the report which, outlined the plans to remove all material from the landscaped mound outside the Brindley Arts centre in order to create a flat, low level grassed area. It was reported that in the future the area could be used to provide access to future redevelopment of the Canal Quarter and other regeneration projects.

It was advised that the material to be moved was known to be contaminated and was supported by a detailed ground investigation and a method statement relating to the proposed application, which would limit the effects of the possible dust and smell issues.

Members were informed that the proposed application was anticipated to take ten weeks to complete and also before the end of the financial year. The proposed method of access and egress from the site would be via the service yard.

**RESOLVED:** That the application be approved subject to the conditions listed below:

Strategic Director  
- Environment

1. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used. (BE2)
2. Submission and agreement of detailed routeing plan for construction traffic including directional signage (BE1)
3. Condition requiring submission and agreement of additional details relating to railings and safety barriers to be installed. (BE22)
4. Requiring that all works be carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement and Ground Investigation and Waste Characterisation Assessment (PR13)
5. Requiring that the area be top-soiled and seeded/grassed in the first available planting season (BE2)
6. 5 Conditions relating to protection of trees to be retained (BE1)
7. Submission and agreement of a scheme of replacement tree planting (BE1)
8. Restricting hours of working and delivery to and from site (BE1)

9. Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing and used. (BE1)

DEV48 - PLAN NO. 06/00872/HBCFUL - PROPOSED NEW 3.2M WIDE COMBINED FOOTPATH / CYCLEWAY LINKING GREENS BRIDGE WITH THE EXISTING CYCLEWAY TO SOUTH OF DARESBURY EXPRESSWAY ON THE LAND TO WEST OF NORTON PRIORY, TUDOR ROAD, RUNCORN.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site. No objections had been received.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the conditions listed below.

Strategic Director  
- Environment

1. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used. (TP9)
2. Condition requiring submission and agreement of additional details relating to safety barriers to be installed. (TP9)
3. Requiring provision and maintenance of adequate visibility splay to junction with existing cycleway to north. (TP9)
4. Requiring provision of notice of commencement of works and access to allow archaeological recording (BE6)

DEV49 - PLAN NO. 06/00874/FUL - PROPOSED TWO STOREY NEW PRIMARY CARE CENTRE INCLUDING RETAILS PHARMACY, TO THE LAND OFF PEELHOUSE LANE, WIDNES.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site. It was reported that one letter of objection had been received details of which were outlined in the report.

United Utilities had raised no objection subject to drainage on a separate system with foul drainage connected into the foul sewer. Network rail had responded and raised no objection, however did raise comment regarding any operations carried out close to the railway line. It was reported that these comments would be forwarded to the applicant.

The Committee discussed various issues regarding the location of the site, access and egress from the site,

proximity to Fairfield High School, and the two local pharmacies near by. It was reported that the proposed new clinic would replace the clinic on Beaconsfield Road.

Concerns were raised regarding parking facilities and the access from Lancaster Road to Peelhouse Lane. In response it was noted that parking would be provided within the UDP requirements and the access road had been approved and checked.

**RESOLVED:** That the application be approved subject to the conditions listed below.

1. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used. (BE2)
2. Amended plans condition. (BE1)
3. Drainage condition, requiring the submission and approval of drainage details. (BE1)
4. Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of both hard and soft landscaping. (BE2)
5. Boundary treatments to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE1)
6. Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing (BE1)
7. Parking conditions (2 separate conditions) to ensure parking and servicing areas is provided and maintained at all times. The use of the premises shall not commence until the vehicle access and parking has been laid out (TP12).
8. Details of the design of the bin storage (BE2).
9. Construction hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
10. Prior to the commencement requirement of Green Travel Plan and implementation of agreed details. (TP16)
11. 8 conditions relating to protection of trees to be retained during construction (BE1)
12. Security shutters to be incorporated and perforated and these details shall be submitted and approved. (BE1)

Strategic Director  
- Environment

DEV50 - PLAN NO. 06/00887/OUT- OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 34. NO. RESIDENTIAL UNITS (COMPRISING THREE AND FOUR STOREY APARTMENT BUILDING) WITH LANDSCAPING MATTERS RESERVED FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION, TO THE LAND AT FORMER OAK LODGE, RICHARDS CLOSE, RUNCORN.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect

of the site. It was reported that one neighbour objection had been received which raised the seven issues listed below:

- development was too close;
- too much car parking next to existing bungalows when accessible to bus services;
- loss of the landscaped area;
- it was felt that it was wrong to utilise green space for car parking;
- inappropriate access roads; and
- noise pollution and access to existing flats and bungalows.

In response it was noted that:

- the amended scheme had reduced the proposed numbers of units from 42 to 34 and at 86 units per hectare, this was appropriate for the size of the site, in view of the overall design of the proposal and would comply with Policy HR2 of the UDP;
- the car parking provision at 125% per dwelling was appropriate for the location of the site near to a regular bus service and local centre;
- as identified within the committee report, there had been inevitable loss of some landscaping to achieve the development. However, this revised scheme retains a greater area of existing trees and proposed new tree planting. It was considered that the regenerative benefits of the development outweigh the loss of landscaping as shown;
- the area was not a designated greenspace and was within the general extent of the residential area within the UDP and Castlefields SPD, therefore the proposal would not conflict with the Council's greenspace policies.
- the Council's highway engineer had raised no objection to the application in relation to the capacity of the access roads to the site;
- it was accepted that there would be noise and pollution from vehicles. However, this would not be necessarily considerably worse than the previous use of the site. The site's proximity to the local bus services would provide good opportunities to use alternative forms of transport to private vehicles; and
- the redevelopment of the site would not alter the current emergency access to the existing flats and bungalows, there would be sufficient access for this for the proposed development. The applicant had agreed to upgrade the area currently used adjacent to Achillies Court for emergency and refuse access

to existing properties at the request of the Highway Engineer.

The Committee was informed the applicant had expressed agreement to provide the appropriate financial contribution under the terms of the Open Space SPD.

It was reported that the plans had been amended to incorporate the bin storage areas nearer to the apartment blocks to avoid stand along structures and greater accessibility for collection.

The Committee was advised the proposal was a step further forward in the regeneration of the Castlefields area and was compliant with the principles of the Castlefields SPD.

Requested modifications to the submitted plans in relation to highway and the requested tree survey had not yet been received at the time of the meeting. In view of this it was requested that authority be deferred to the Operational Director of Environment and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, subject to the submission of acceptable amended plans and a tree survey.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the following:

A) the applicant entering into a legal agreement for the provision of off-site open space;

B) the following 27 conditions listed below: -

1. Standard Outline planning conditions (x 4)
2. Subject to amended plans (Policy BE1, BE2)
3. Provision in full of car parking prior to commencement of construction of building.
4. Prior to commencement of development details of widening of adjacent footway provided and agreed in writing. (Policy BE1)
5. Prior to commencement the submission of material samples for approval (Policy BE2).
6. Prior to the commencement details of tree protection measures (x7)(Policy BE1).
7. Prior to commencement the submission of details of all boundary treatments for approval (Policy BE22).
8. Prior to commencement the submission of details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme (Policy BE1).
9. Prior to commencement the submission of detailed

species of soft landscaping for approval (Policy BE1).

- 10. Prior to commencement the submission of details of bin and cycle stores, to be secured, for approval (Policy BE2).
- 11. Prior to commencement the submission of a ground investigation and undertaking of any remedial works where required (Policy PR14).
- 12. Prior to commencement the submission of existing ground levels and proposed finished floor/ground levels for approval (Policy BE1).
- 13. Prior to commencement the submission of drainage details for approval (Policy BE1).
- 14. Prior to commencement the submission of details of wheel wash to be used throughout the course of the construction period (Policy BE1).
- 15. Landscaping scheme to be implemented during the course of development or next available planting season (Policy BE1).
- 16. Access, roads, car parking and service areas to be laid out prior to occupation of premises (Policy BE1, TP6, TP7, TP12 and TP17).
- 17. No lighting to be installed within the site or on the building without further approval from the Local Planning Authority (Policy BE1 and PR4).
- 18. Restricted hours of construction (Policy BE1).

The following amendment to condition **No. 4** was stated as follows:

The condition should be extended to include the adjacent footpath to the north west of the site adjacent to Achilles court, in order to achieve a formalisation and "tidying up" of this area for emergency and refuse collection for existing dwellings.

- C) That if the legal agreement is not executed within a reasonable period of time authority be delegated to the Operational Director – Environmental and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman to refuse the application on grounds that it fails to comply with UDP Policy S25 Planning Obligations.

#### DEV51 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

It was reported that appeals had been received as a result of the following applications: -

06/00281/FUL	Application for the retention of boundary wall and gates at 13 Penrhyn Crescent
--------------	---

Runcorn

06/00561/FUL      Proposed two storey extension to front at 5 Wilsden Road Widnes

It was noted that appeals were lodged following the Council's refusal of the following applications:-

Decisions had been received as follows :-

05/00932/FUL      Retrospective application for retention of boundary fencing (to replace damaged section) at Selwyns Travel Ltd Cavendish Farm Road Runcorn

**This appeal was dismissed**

05/01054/FUL      Proposed erection of amateur radio mast at 4 Allen Road Runcorn

**This appeal was dismissed**

06/00159/TEL      Application for prior approval for 1 No. 12.5m telegraph pole column and 1 No. outdoor cabinet on Land to The West of Railway Station Liverpool Road Widnes

**This appeal was allowed**

The Council considered that prior approval would be required as it would be in a prominent location near residential areas and in the vicinity of two existing

telecommunication masts, which would result in an unacceptable proliferation of telecommunication equipment. It would also be in an unacceptable position within the highway.

The Planning Inspectorate considered the above, but stated that no alternative locations were suggested by The Council and considered an adequate assessment of possible alternative sites had been undertaken, and that there are no available alternatives which would represent a preferable environmental solution. It was concluded that the siting and appearance of the proposed development would not be damaging to the character and appearance of this part of Widnes, and would not conflict with Policy BE21 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

**3) The following applications have been withdrawn :-**

06/00806/FUL	Proposed single storey side extensions to provide bedroom and en suite at 23 Addison Square Widnes
06/00820/FUL	Proposed erection of 5 No detached dwellings at 5 Holt Lane Runcorn

*Meeting ended at 6.43 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Development Control Committee

**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Environment

**SUBJECT:** Planning applications to be determined by the Committee

The following applications for planning permission are submitted to the Committee for consideration with a recommendation in each case. Those applications marked \* are considered to have significant employment implications.

An Amendments List, containing the categorisation of planning applications, additional information and amendments to recommendations, will be circulated to Committee Members before the meeting together with plans showing the location of each application site. Those applications now before the Committee, where the planning issues are considered clear by the Chairman, will be included in List A. Unless a Member considers that additional information is required on a particular application in List A it is **RECOMMENDED** that each of the applications be determined (whether for approval or for refusal) in accordance with the conditions or the reasons printed in the Agenda and in the Amendments List previously circulated.

The remaining applications are included in List B. Together with those applications about which Members require further information, List B applications will be considered following determination of applications remaining in List A.

---

**PLAN NUMBER:** 06/00883/FUL

**APPLICANT:** Stadium (Widnes) Ltd

**PROPOSAL:** Proposed redevelopment of Windmill Centre to provide single storey retail units (Class A1) with mezzanine floors.

**ADDRESS OF SITE:** The Windmill Centre, Lugsdale Road, Widnes

**WARD:** Riverside/Appleton

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve with conditions

**CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION:**

The proposal has been advertised by a site notice and a press notice. The surrounding businesses and residents, along with the Ward Councillors have also been consulted. No letters of objection have been received.

The Health & Safety Executive, Environment Agency and United Utilities have been consulted and do not raise any objections. However, any detailed issues raised will be addressed in the Observations and Issues Section of this report.

The Council's Highways Engineer, Environmental Health Officer, and Landscape & Conservation Officer have also been consulted and any issues raised will also be discussed in the Observations and Issues Section of this report.

**SITE/LOCATION:**

The site is 4.2 ha in size and is the existing Windmill Shopping Centre, Lugsdale Road, Widnes.

**RELEVANT HISTORY:**

The most recent planning applications for the site include proposed redevelopment of existing shopping centre including partial demolition of existing units and erection of replacement A1 retail, A2 and A3 restaurant units (application no.04/00981/FUL), which was approved in January 2005.

There was also approval given for proposed erection of single storey building for Class A1 and Class A2 use in October 2005.

**UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION, KEY POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES:**

The site is allocated in the Primary Shopping Area of Widnes Town Centre, where Policy TC4 Retail Development Within Designated Shopping Centres of the Halton Unitary Development Plan is of relevance. The other policies of relevance include:

- S17 Retail Development
- TC1 Retail and Leisure Allocations
- TP1 Public Transport Provisions as Part of New Development
- TC5 Design of Retail Development
- TP12 Car Parking
- BE1 General Requirements for Development
- BE2 Quality of Design
- BE18 Access to New Buildings Used by the Public
- TP6 Cycle Provision as Part of New Development
- TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
- TP14 Transport Assessments
- TP16 Green Travel Plans

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (formerly RPG 13) March 2003, forms part of the development plan along with the Halton Unitary Development Plan. The relevant policies SD1 (The North West Metropolitan Area-Regional Poles and Surrounding Areas), SD2 (Other Settlements within the North West Metropolitan Area) and EC8 (Town Centres-Retail, Leisure and Office Development).

The National Planning Policy of relevance is Planning Policy Statement 6- Planning for Town Centres (March 2005).

The policy issues are discussed in more detail in the Observations and Issues section of the report.

#### OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES:

The proposal is for the redevelopment of Windmill Centre to provide single storey retail units (Class A1) with mezzanine floorspace. All but one of the existing units are to be demolished and re-built. The car parking will be provided at surface level and below ground.

#### Design & Access Statement Principles

A Design & Access Statement accompanied the planning application and explains the key factors that have influenced the design of this scheme.

##### i) Design

The existing design is a simple portal frame style with a masonry base with metal cladding above, with little cohesion from one phase to the next. The development presents a hard edge to the rest of the town, with limited landscaping.

The key areas of potential improvement identified were,

- Visual coherence and identity,
- Pedestrian circulation around the town centre,
- Landscaping around the site.

The potential to form a strong urban edge to Widnes Town Centre and improve the pedestrian links into the town was the main reason provided for the decision to demolish the majority of the existing structures on site.

The Design & Access Statement focuses on the existing architecture to the west and the integration of the proposal with this as opposed to designing it standing apart from the townscape.

The facades of the units are broken up with overlapping blocks of cladding. The potential colour palette of terracotta, grey, silver and white relates to the predominantly red brick and slate roofed buildings of the existing part of the

town. Below the canopy will be terracotta walls, consisting of stack-bonded masonry.

Over the shop entrances there is a lightweight glazed structure that highlights where the entrance of the units are and also provides some visual appeal. The glazing is also extended to the frontages of the buildings themselves, which will provide an 'open' feel and pleasant ambience within the retail park itself.

Signage is shown as being limited to the main sign for the retail park itself and individual over door sign and hanging signs under the canopies, which will be self-illuminated.

The car park has been designed on two levels to maximise the car parking within the retail park. The site entrance remains as existing with the exception of the regraded route down to the lower level. The existing access off Gerrard Street would be closed. A new lighting system is proposed throughout the car park for safety and accessibility. Also the demolition of the existing stand alone units will provide more car parking and better general visibility.

The applicant has been requested for further details to be provided for the area adjacent to the pedestrian access off Gerrard Street and the car parking area. This is to show the public realm area works in relation to the car park, proposed shop units and access into the retail park. An update and presentation will be provided at Committee.

## ii) Access

The Design & Access Statement focuses on the access in the broadest sense. This includes visitors and staff who may have sensory, mobility and/or hidden impairments, plus others to whom the built environment is disabling such as elders, children and parents with young children and people who have little understanding of written English. This shows an inclusive approach to access within the development.

The strategy has been to design out barriers as far as achievable to enable people to access all areas of the development. Gradients of the external landscaping, level landings, level access into the retail units have all been designed as part of the scheme to meet the requirements of building regulations.

Disabled parking is provided on both levels of the car park and there is a lift that connects the two levels.

Freestanding columns supporting the canopies will carry contrasting warning devices to aid visibility for the visually impaired.

The site is already well connected to the public transport system with frequent buses running along Gerrard Street, with bus stops in both directions. This is located near to the proposed pedestrian access into the retail park and as part

of the planning application the applicants will provide a pedestrian crossing across Gerrard Street. This will ensure that the development is linked to the bus stop opposite, and the residential area opposite and beyond.

The other main pedestrian link from the development is into Widnes Road and the existing town centre. This will be maintained to ensure the development links into the area.

### Policy

#### i) National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Statement 6-Planning for Town Centres (March 2005), is the national planning policy of relevance and post dates the drafting of the policies within the town centre chapters of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

The policy direction of this document is to promote town centres as the preferred location for the development of new retail facilities. In establishing the evidence for this there are several issues that potentially need consideration, these are:

- An assessment of the need for the development
- Identifying the appropriate scale for the development
- Applying the sequential approach to site selection (i.e in centre sites are preferable to edge of centre and out of centre sites)
- An assessment of the impact of a development on the vitality and viability of existing centres
- Ensuring that sites are accessible to public transport facilities.

#### ii) The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England (March 2003)

The relevant policies are SD1 The North West Metropolitan Area-Regional Poles and Surrounding Areas), SD2 Other Settlements within the North West Metropolitan Area and EC8 Town Centres-Retail, Leisure and Office Development.

Policy SD1 explains that the North West Metropolitan Area includes Halton. It indicates within this area the first priority will be given to development and resources that enhance city centres of Liverpool and Manchester/Salford and their surrounding inner areas.

Policy SD2 is of importance because it states that wide ranging regeneration and environmental enhancement should be secured, especially in older parts of the metropolitan settlements, including Runcorn. The policy goes on to state that very significant enhancement is required for Runcorn, Widnes and Ellesmere Port, in terms of image and opportunities in order to provide higher quality of life overall. Development in these areas should be sustainable and complementary to that in connection with Policy SD1.

Policy EC8 recognises the continued need to protect, sustain and improve all of the town and city centres in the region. This includes encouraging new retail, leisure and/or mixed use developments within existing defined town and city centre boundaries, with retail being directed particularly to primary shopping areas.

Policy RDF1 Main Development Locations supports the principle concentrating most new development into the existing urban areas of the region including regional towns and cities of which Widnes is included.

The RSS (referred to as the North West Plan) is currently under review and has reached the stage of Examination in Public.

### iii) Halton Unitary Development Plan

The site is allocated in the primary shopping area, the details of relevant policies are discussed below.

Policy S17 indicates that no retail development will be permitted in one town centre that could seriously harm the vitality and viability of another in Halton. Development should be directed towards allocated sites and the primary shopping areas of the designated town centres. These must be appropriate in scale and character to the respective town centre.

Policy TP1 states that development will only be permitted where provision exists or is made for adequate access by public transport. No building within a development should be more than 400 metres walking distance from a bus stop or railway station.

Policy TC1 lists a number of sites, which are allocated for retail and other commercial development, including in centre, edge and out of centre. The site is not considered as a potentially available site at the time that the UDP was being drafted.

Policy TC4 indicates that retail development proposals within Primary Shopping Areas will be permitted provided that they are of a size and scale appropriate to the character and function of the centre and contribute to its vitality and viability.

Policy TC5 (Design of Retail Development) states that retail development, including extensions will be permitted if various criteria (a-e) are met which are:

- a) design proposals should not present blank frontages or be inward looking
- b) existing building lines should be maintained
- c) building design must add to the vitality of the street scene
- d) where appropriate, car parking should be located away from the street frontage that is closest to the main shopping streets,
- e) purpose built recycling facilities should be provided in large retail schemes.

## ii) Other Material Consideration

Review of UDP Retail and Leisure Issues (Chesterton – October 2002) (hereafter referred to as ‘the Chesterton Report’)

Chesterton carried out a Borough wide review of retail and leisure issues in 2002, including a capacity assessment, to feed through into the Unitary Development Plan. This updated earlier reports by Chesterton in 1999 and Herring Baker Harris in 1996. The main findings in connection with Widnes were that a need was identified for an additional 5,300 sq.m net (6,900 sq.m gross) of additional town centre floorspace by 2016 and that it will be necessary to provide additional sites to accommodate large scale retail and leisure uses. It is of note that methodologically, the study splits future quantitative need 50/50 between town centre floorspace and retail warehouse floorspace (para 4.26).

### Assessment

The following assessment is based around the key retail policy matters identified by national, regional and local planning policy. Other issues have already been discussed above or are for consideration in other sections of the report. The main issues are therefore as follows:

1) Whether the application is best classified as in centre or edge of centre

The application site falls within the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) of Widnes town centre and is therefore in centre in retail policy terms.

2) Scale of development

There are three matters to take into account when considering whether the proposal is in scale with the centre. These are: the scale of additional floorspace in relation to existing provision in Widnes; the amount of additional floorspace in relation to that identified by the Chesterton report; and the effect of the proposal upon Widnes’s position in the retail hierarchy.

Widnes is the largest shopping centre in Halton comprising 65,589 sqm total floorspace (GOAD October 2005). The Windmill Centre provided 11,505 sqm of gross retail floor space. In 2005 planning permission was granted for an additional 5,216 sqm of retail floor space, 1,236 sqm of this has been implemented leaving 3,980 sqm unimplemented. The current application (taking into account the current Windmill Centre development, part of which is proposed to be demolished) would increase retail floorspace by 12,172 sqm to a total of 27,657 sqm. Also taking into account the massing of the proposed development, this is in scale with Widnes town centre.

The Chesterton report of 2002 states that up to 2016 Widnes has a net floorspace requirement of 5,300 sqm. The net increase in floorspace from the current proposal would be 7,921 sqm. Chesterton estimates are however based upon two major assumptions a) that there is a 50/50 split between

additional quantitative need for Widnes town centre and retail warehousing floorspace (which is now inconsistent with national advice) b) that the Widnes town centre market share will remain constant up to the year 2016. In actual fact, there would be benefits from increasing this market share in order to claw back of trade from other centres. This therefore does not raise any issues in terms of development being inappropriate in scale to Widnes town centre. Quantitative need is considered in more detail below.

Comparison floorspace figures provided by NWRA panel briefing paper 16 – Retail Development (September 2006) in connection with emerging Policy W5 of Regional Spatial Strategy show that the closest town centres outside the Borough are all somewhat larger centres than Widnes which, being larger than Halton Lea and Runcorn Old Town, is the largest centre within the Borough. The proposed increase in floorspace resulting from the application would therefore not alter Widnes' position in the retail hierarchy and the proposal can therefore be considered to be in scale with Widnes town centre.

### 3) Retail Need

Retail need is a key component in assessing proposals for such uses. There are two components to this: quantitative need (is their sufficient spending in the catchment area to support the proposal?) and qualitative need (would the proposal increase the retail offer in the area and if so, how?) Government policy indicates that greater emphasis should be placed upon the quantitative need for new retail floorspace, but that qualitative considerations are also relevant. The proposal is 'in centre' in retail policy terms and in floorspace terms is in scale with Widnes town centre. As such, retail need for the development does not need to be demonstrated. However, the applicant has taken a cautious approach and considered need in any event.

#### Quantitative Need

This has been assessed on the basis of the anticipated additional turnover generated by the proposed development compared to the total available surplus in expenditure growth in the catchment area, taking existing commitments into account. This updates the Chesterton report. The applicant concludes (at para 5.42 of their planning statement and retail assessment) that there is capacity for all existing non-food retail commitments and the Widnes Shopping Park Proposal (i.e. the current application) in both floorspace and expenditure terms at the scheme's design year of 2010. On this basis quantitative need for the proposal would be proven.

#### Qualitative Need

There is a good case in terms of qualitative need for the proposal. It would introduce a range of larger retail premises to attract new operators and improve the variety of offer in Widnes town centre, including multiple traders. This would enable Widnes to compete more effectively with centres in the wider area. The development would also provide an additional anchor for the town centre.

#### 4) Sequential Approach

The proposal site falls within the Primary Shopping Area of Widnes town centre as identified in the adopted Unitary Development Plan. As such it is a sequentially preferred location for the development proposed.

#### 5) Retail Impact (including cumulative impact)

Section 8 of the applicant's Planning Statement and Retail Assessment considers the effect on the vitality and viability of Widnes. It is agreed that the proposal would have an overall significant positive effect on Widnes town centre in terms of new and improved retail offer and investment.

Paragraph 3.20 of PPS6 states that "Impact assessments should be undertaken for any application for a main town centre use which would be in an edge or out of centre location and which is not in accordance with an up to date development plan strategy. Where a significant development is in centre, not in accordance with the development plan strategy, would substantially increase the attraction of the centre and could have an impact on other centres, the impact on other centres will also need to be assessed." As the current application is in centre and is in accordance with the development plan strategy it is considered that a quantitative impact assessment is not required in this instance.

The applicant has, however, considered impact upon other town centres in qualitative terms in their Planning Statement and Retail Assessment.

Paragraphs 7.8 to 7.12 deal with the impact of the proposal upon the vitality and viability of other town centres in the Borough i.e. Runcorn Old Town and Halton Lea in a qualitative manner. In respect of the Old Town, paragraph 7.9 states that the redevelopment of the Windmill Centre is unlikely to have a negative impact given the distinct differences in the functions of the Old Town and Widnes. In respect of Halton Lea, paragraph 7.12 concludes that the impact upon this centre would be marginal and unlikely to cause harm to the existing facilities or the overall health of the centre.

It is of note that the assessment of impact can also be linked to the retail hierarchy of the area. As previously discussed, it is not considered that the proposal would affect the established centre hierarchy in the area and it would not therefore cause harm to other centres. Other town centres have been subject to their own developments to sustain and enhance their respective roles.

#### 6) Other Material Considerations

##### a) Employment creation

It is estimated by the applicant that the proposal would create in the region of 500 jobs.

b) Regeneration

The proposal would involve investment in Widnes that would underpin wider regeneration initiatives to ensure that the centre meets the needs of the local community.

c) Relationship to Existing Town Centre

There have always been issues within Widnes town centre regarding its layout and how the different parts of the town relate to each other. This scale of development proposal therefore represents an opportunity to make much needed improvements to the centre in terms of design and access. The applicants have tried to demonstrate within their supporting statement that the current configuration of the town's retail core fails to take advantage of this gateway site both in terms of its visual presentation and its relationship to the existing centre.

Certainly the new development would provide much more attractive frontages than the current buildings but as to whether this will improve the footfall within and through the development will greatly depend upon the retailers that occupy the new floorspace. Efforts have been made by the developer and architect to give the impression that the development would form an integral part of the centre. As stated within the design and access statement, reference has been made to the existing architecture to the west of the site in order to provide that necessary visual linkage. In addition to this the pedestrian routes would be greatly simplified from the current routes and the increased floorspace provision should attract higher profile retailers which in turn should attract pedestrians to this area.

Conclusion

CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) guidance encourages developers to create or retain open street environments to assist in integration with the existing context of the town. The new routes provided will have a continuous canopy running the whole length of the retail frontage, this will provide a balance between sheltered walkways and those lit by daylight, these partially internalised sections are straight, allowing pedestrians to see clearly where they are heading and provide an element of security. Where possible the proposal has used dual frontages and tried to limit the extent that the development would turn its back on the existing centre.

The applicants have been asked to consider further the wider public realm and how the development relates to the rest of the town centre and will be providing more thoughts on this within the presentation to be made to the Committee.

The development of the car park and associated landscaping does provide a more attractive and bolder feature than at present, additionally it also provides a gateway feature to this side of the town centre. To sum up, in policy terms

the proposal does meet the design requirements of policy TC5 design of retail development, although additional requirements to ensure this development complies with this policy for recycling facilities, public realm and bin storage have been requested are yet to be incorporated into the scheme. Conditions can be added to any permission and an update will be provided orally to Committee.

The proposal complies with development plan policy.

### Highways Issues

The servicing of the units 1-7 will be via the private road to the rear with stock for all units being unloaded at ground floor level via an elevated service yard that has a goods lift for the three units at lower ground level. The space to the rear of units 3 and 4 will allow an articulated HGV to turn around in one manoeuvre.

Units 1a-5a will be serviced via the existing yard that is accessed off Winfield Way. Some regrading of the existing site levels will be required to provide easy access to the new units.

TP12 (Car parking): The UDP introduces maximum car parking standards. The standard for non-food is a maximum of 1 space per 20 sq.m. 10% of spaces should be provided to mobility standard (3.6 metres width minimum), with half of these being signed for the exclusive use of disabled people. Minimum cycle parking standards in the emerging UDP are 1 space per 180 sq.m. PPG13 standards are more lenient, being 1 space per 20 sq.m for non-food when the floorspace of the development is greater than 1000sq.m.

With regards to remaining transport and highway policies, criterion 2 of TP5 indicates that taxi ranks should be provided as part of new retail developments, TP6 (Cycling provision as part of new development) introduces criteria a) – d) with which development must comprise, TP7 (Pedestrian provision as part of new development) requires development to incorporate safe and convenient pedestrian footways and routes and TP14 (Transport Assessments) requires a TA to be submitted for any retail development that will have significant transport implications. Appendix 1 of the UDP indicates that TA's should be undertaken as a matter of course for retail developments greater than 1000 sq.m and it is of note that a TA has been submitted in connection with this application. Policy TP16 requires a green travel plan to be agreed as part of certain developments, including major shopping development proposals.

The existing access, from Gerrard Street, is to be closed and one access is proposed into the site. The Transport Assessment, accompanying the application, highlights further assessment is required for the junction and the gyratory which serves the Economic Development Zone Area. The details following this assessment will determine what works are required and the financial contribution required as part of a Section 106 Agreement, whilst the

technical assessment of the transport assessment is not concluded, at this stage, it is clear that there are no significant issues or objections in principle to the scheme proposed. An update will be provided orally at Committee.

### Conclusion

The proposal is seen as an opportunity to improve the Widnes Town Centre both in terms of design and access. This will link into the existing centre and surrounding residential area, and pedestrian links will enable this to take place.

The use of good quality materials and good quality lighting, hard and soft landscaping along with a public art feature will ensure that the site is successfully developed. The proposal does comply with the development plan policy.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- A) The application is referred to the Secretary of State under the Town and Country Planning (Shopping Direction) (England and Wales) (No2) Direction 1993.
- B) Subject to satisfactory receipt of details showing the public realm details and the application not being 'called in' by the Secretary of State, authority be delegated to the Operational Director Environmental and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman to approve the application subject to the following conditions and the entering into of a Section 106 agreement for contributions to the gyratory, public transport contribution in lieu of adequate number of car parking spaces and public realm onto Widnes Road:
- C) Conditions relating to the following:
  - 1. Standard commencement condition
  - 2. Submission of good quality materials (BE2)
  - 3. Boundary treatment (BE2)
  - 4. Landscaping both hard and soft, including tree planting (BE2)
  - 5. Cycle parking (TP6)
  - 6. Provision of Green Travel Plan (TP16)
  - 7. Provision of Bin Storage/Waste (BE1)
  - 8. Wheelwash during construction (BE1)
  - 9. Construction and delivery hours (BE1)
  - 10. Controlled pedestrian crossing (TP7)
  - 11. Improvements to bus stops (TP2)
  - 12. Reconstruction of Gerrard Street footway (TP7)
  - 13. Provision of taxi layby (TP5)
  - 14. Grampian style condition improvements of pedestrian crossing facilities at service entrance, Greenoaks way and Lugsdale Road (TP7)
  - 15. Provision of public art (BE2)
  - 16. Details of footway closures to frontage of site (TP7)
  - 17. Details of lighting scheme (BE2)

18. Provision of recycling facilities (BE2)
19. Details of swept paths (BE2)
20. Parking management plan (TP12)
21. Disabled parking (BE1)
22. No outside storage (BE1)
23. Opening hours (BE1)
24. Delivery Hours (BE1)
25. Site investigation / remediation required to be carried out (PR14).

---

**PLAN NUMBER:** 06/00936/FUL

**APPLICANT:** Saffil Ltd

**PROPOSAL:** Proposed single storey warehouse to replace existing with installation of 2 no. boilers and 1 no. oil tank.

**ADDRESS OF SITE:** Saffil Ltd, Tanhouse Lane, Widnes

**WARD:** Halton View

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve with conditions

**CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION:**

The proposal has been advertised by a site notice and a press notice. The surrounding businesses have also been consulted and no objections have been raised.

The Health & Safety Executive, Environment Agency and United Utilities have been consulted and do not raise any objections. However, any detailed issues raised will be addressed in the Observations and Issues Section of this report.

The Council's Highways Engineer, Environmental Health Officer, and Major Projects Team have also been consulted and any issues raised will also be discussed in the Observations and Issues Section of this report.

**SITE/LOCATION:**

The site is located off Tanhouse Lane, and within Saffil's existing works. The site is 2,800 square metres in area and bounded by Moss Bank Road to the north, derelict land to the west and south and Saffil's existing building to the east. The site is separated from the St Helen's Canal by a further tract of derelict land.

**RELEVANT HISTORY:**

The most recent planning applications for Saffil Ltd have been for the offices, which is the opposite end of their site. The application relevant to this area is for proposed extension (2940 sqm) to existing production building and associated external structures, including a 40m stack to proposed effluent treatment works and extension to existing substation (Application no. 03/00185/EIA).

#### UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION, KEY POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES:

The site is allocated in the Widnes Waterfront Action Area where Policy RG3 Action Area 3, of the Halton Unitary Development Plan is of relevance. It is also allocated in a Coastal Zone Developed Area where Policy GE30 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan is also of relevance.

The Widnes Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document and the Planning Policy Statement 23 Planning and Pollution Control are also of relevance.

#### OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES:

The proposal is for a warehouse building measuring 67 metres in length and 31.2 metres in width. The site is slightly sloped therefore the height varies from 10.59m to 11.57m as measured from the ground level.

This is a replacement of the warehouse, which was burnt down recently. It is however, not to be located on the same part of the site and will include the demolition of another building. The application also includes the installation of two boilers and an oil tank.

#### Design

The building is shown as a structural single span portal frame with galvanised cold rolled side rails and purlins. The details of colours of cladding are to be agreed by condition. The proposal shows an open sided link corridor linking the proposed building to an existing building. This allows the transportation of finished products via forklift truck. There is also an amenity area included within the warehouse building. The warehouse is considered of suitable design and fits in with the area.

The proposed boilers and oil tanks are currently temporary and the proposal is to make these permanent. These are adjacent to the existing plant, which is mostly housed within a steel portal framed building with external oil tank.

The area to the north, of the new warehouse, will be landscaped and maintained as a planted area. The nature and type of planting can be added as a condition.

#### Access

The proposed warehouse is situated at the far end of the site and will be accessed by the existing site access routes from the main highway, at Tan House Lane. The access is controlled by on site security and gates. There are no new access roads proposed as part of this development.

The design of the building also allows access for forklift trucks via an open sided link corridor.

There is pedestrian access through doors provided on all elevations of the warehouse.

### Policy

The site is allocated within the Action Area 3: Widnes Waterfront, where policy RG3 is relevant. Employment uses, B1 (Office Use), B2 (General Manufacturing) and B8 (Storage & Distribution) are acceptable within this area.

Policy GE30 paragraph 2 is of relevance and states that all proposals should acknowledge their location within the Mersey Coastal Zone by paying particular attention to environmental quality and accessibility to coast. Due to the nature of the business it is not appropriate to ensure accessibility to the coast. However, the removal of a derelict poor quality building and replacement with new warehouse is going some way to improving the environmental quality.

The Supplementary Planning Document for the Widnes Waterfront Area is also relevant to this application. The proposal fits into the objectives of the SPD.

### Contaminated Land

A supporting document was submitted with the application, which looks at the ground contamination issues. The Council's Environmental Health Officers have been in discussion both pre-application and following the submission of the application on the various land contamination issues relevant to the site.

The Environment Agency has also provided comments that a condition regarding a ground investigation survey should be added. They have also suggested that a condition is added to ensure the applicants show a scheme for storage, handling, loading and unloading of fuels, oils, chemicals, or effluents.

### Other Highways Issues

There is adequate access and additional car parking shown within the proposal. Due to the size of the development and how it fits in with the existing premises, there is a requirement for a Travel Plan to be produced. This can be conditioned accordingly.

## Conclusion

The proposal is within the Waterfront Area and is covered by the adopted SPD. The new building will replace a poor quality existing building and further improve the appearance of this part of the EDZ.

The proposal is therefore recommended for approval with conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposal is therefore recommended for approval subject to the appropriate conditions: -

1. Standard condition relating to timescale.
2. Details of materials.
3. Landscaping condition.
4. Remediation measures required following ground investigation survey.
5. Scheme for storage and handling of chemical storage.
6. Parking condition to ensure parking provided and maintained at all times.

---

**PLAN NUMBER:** 06/00938/FUL

**APPLICANT:** David Wilson Homes NW

**PROPOSAL:** Proposed erection of 99 dwellings and associated works

**ADDRESS OF SITE:** Site H3, Queensbury Way, Widnes

**WARD:** Birchfield

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve subject to Conditions

## **CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION:**

Adjoining properties have been consulted and the application advertised by way of site and press notice. The Council's Highways Engineer, Environmental Health, Landscape Architects and Trees and Woodlands Officer have been consulted as have United Utilities, the Environment Agency, Cheshire Fire Authority and MANWEB.

4 letters of representation have been received relating to the loss of a green field site and impact on character of the area, increased traffic levels and highway safety also relating to wider highway network including Queensbury Way, Sandy Lane and Falkirk Avenue and questioning whether there will be traffic calming to the main access road.

Cheshire Fire Authority and United Utilities have confirmed that they raise no objections in principle. Any other significant issues and comments will be covered later in this report.

**SITE/LOCATION:**

An area providing approximately 4.44 hectares of developable land which is allocated for Residential purposes in the Halton Unitary Development Plan, currently vacant former agricultural land. Access is proposed from Galway Avenue via Queensbury Way, Widnes

**RELEVANT HISTORY:**

Permission was previously granted (06/00034/FUL) for 107 No. dwellings and ancillary works. Site H3 forms one of the sites included in the Upton Rocks Development Framework and allocated for housing in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. A draft planning brief has been prepared.

**UDP PLAN DESIGNATION, KEY POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES:**

The site is allocated for residential development in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. Policies H1 Provision for New Housing and H2 Design and Density of New Residential Development, the draft planning brief for sites H2 and H3 and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance for New Residential Development are of particular relevance.

**OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES:**

Permission is sought for a scheme of residential development on site H3, Upton Rocks. The proposals comprise a mix of 4 and 5 bed properties of between two and three storeys. This application follows an earlier planning permission for residential development of 107 dwellings on the site and has been submitted to satisfy more closely market demand and improve saleability of the properties.

**Design, Character and Amenity**

As required by the draft development brief the scheme provides for a lower density development of predominantly large detached properties at approximately 10 dwellings to the acre. Despite this the proposal, in part, falls short of the Council's normal standards in terms of overlooking and separation. Amended plans have been requested to increase separation between dwellings and subject to satisfactory resolution of these issues it is considered that a good quality of design in keeping with earlier developments can be provided. Provision for such variation is provided for within the development brief for the site. The scheme is considered to provide more than sufficient separation distances to existing and surrounding properties and relate to and take advantage as far as possible of the adjoining green

corridors and highways which bound the site. Particular attention has been paid to the character and design of properties overlooking Upton Rocks Park which adjoins the site.

Conditions relating to hours of construction and wheel wash facilities need to be included on any permission given to ensure that disturbance to existing local residents is kept to a minimum. Conditions relating to materials to be used, landscaping and highways provision are also required to ensure the quality of the final scheme. Members will be updated regarding amended plans as appropriate.

#### Highways and Parking

A single access is proposed to the development from Galway Avenue via the existing roundabout at Queensbury Way. Galway Avenue was originally constructed to a sufficient standard to provide for the additional dwellings and, whilst a number of relatively minor amendments have been required relating to the internal layout, it is considered that adequate provision can be made for highway circulation and parking within the scheme. As such no significant highway objections are raised. A condition to restrict permitted development rights for frontage boundary treatment is however considered necessary to protect adequate highway visibility throughout the scheme and restricting conversion of garages to habitable rooms to allow sufficient off-street parking to be maintained.

Amendments may also be required to provide adequate emergency and pedestrian/ cycle access upon which discussions are ongoing. Members will be updated as required.

#### Contaminated Land

As with the earlier application the Councils Environmental Health Officers confirmed that a number of former ponds on the site have been filled and that detailed ground investigation should be provided. No objection is raised in principle however and it is considered that this can be adequately secured by condition.

#### Trees and Landscape Features

The scheme will result in the loss of a single tree from the site. This is not however considered of particular quality and the Councils Trees and Woodlands Officer raises no objections subject to replacement planting by condition.

The site also directly adjoins the Upton Rocks Park and more specifically related drainage ditches. Whilst construction activities and debris have the potential to cause damage to these areas it is considered that conditions requiring the provision and maintenance of secure fencing can be provided by condition to adequately protect these features.

### Flooding

Due to the scale of the proposed development a Flood Risk Assessment would normally be required under new guidance in the form of PPS25: Development and Flood Risk. Given the earlier planning permission however the Environment Agency have agreed to waiver that requirement in this case. However, due to a known shortage of capacity for surface water discharge in the area and due to the potential increase in surface water run-off as a result of additional impermeable surfacing such as roofs, roads, footpaths etc. they have requested that a “surface water regulation system” be provided as part of the development in accordance with an agreed scheme. The Environment Agency has confirmed that they are satisfied that this can be adequately controlled by condition.

### Summary and Conclusion

Site H3 is the last allocated residential site of the Upton Rocks development area and already benefits from highway access and largely established infrastructure. The site will play an important role in the completion of the area fitting within the existing and proposed development and landscape framework.

The overall objectives of the Planning Brief, the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on New Residential Development, Halton Unitary Development Plan and other policy guidance are considered to be met within the proposed submission. The current proposals are considered to offer a good quality of development suited to the character of the wider area and as such are recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve subject to conditions relating to the following:

1. Condition specifying amended plans (BE1)
2. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
3. Drainage condition, requiring the submission and approval of drainage details to include a surface water regulation system. (BE1)
4. Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of both hard and soft landscaping to include replacement tree planting. (BE2)
5. Boundary treatments including any retaining walls to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE2)
6. Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing and used throughout construction. (BE1)
7. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
8. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
9. Submission and agreement of finished floor and site levels. (BE1)

- 10.2 conditions relating to restriction of permitted development rights relating to garage conversions and frontage boundary fences etc. (BE1)
11. Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)
12. Protection of drainage ditches during construction (BE1)
13. Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing and implemented. (PR14)

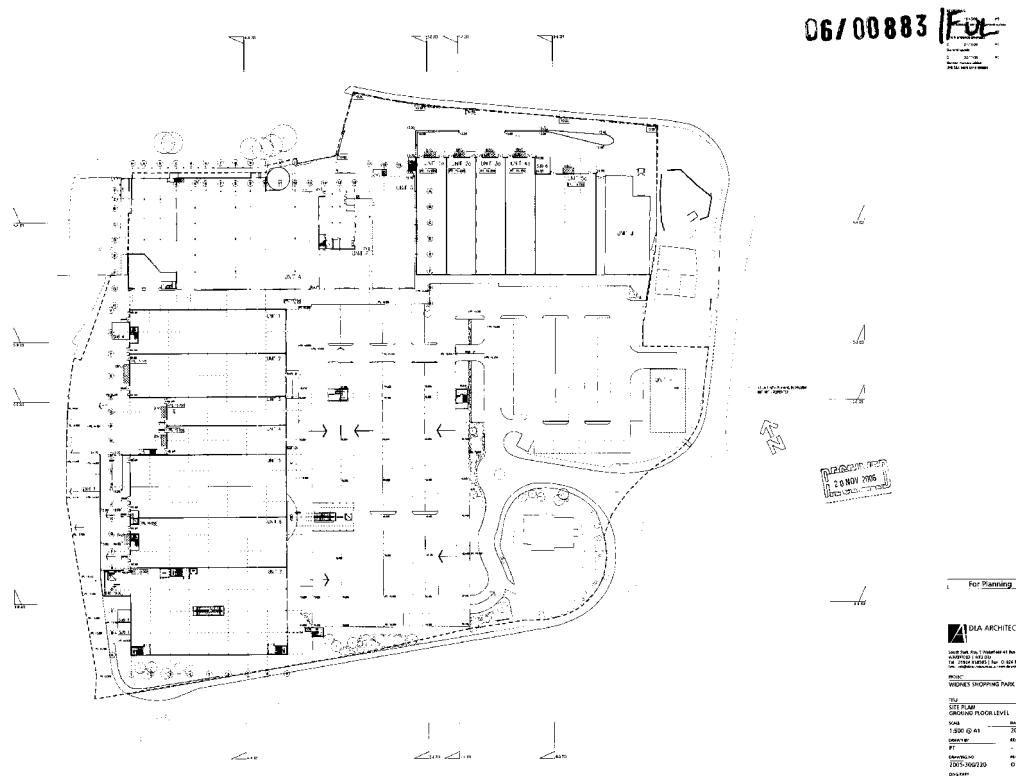
---



**PLAN 1b  
PLAN NUMBER 06/00883/FUL  
LAYOUT PLAN**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL  
COMMITTEE**

**12th February 2007**



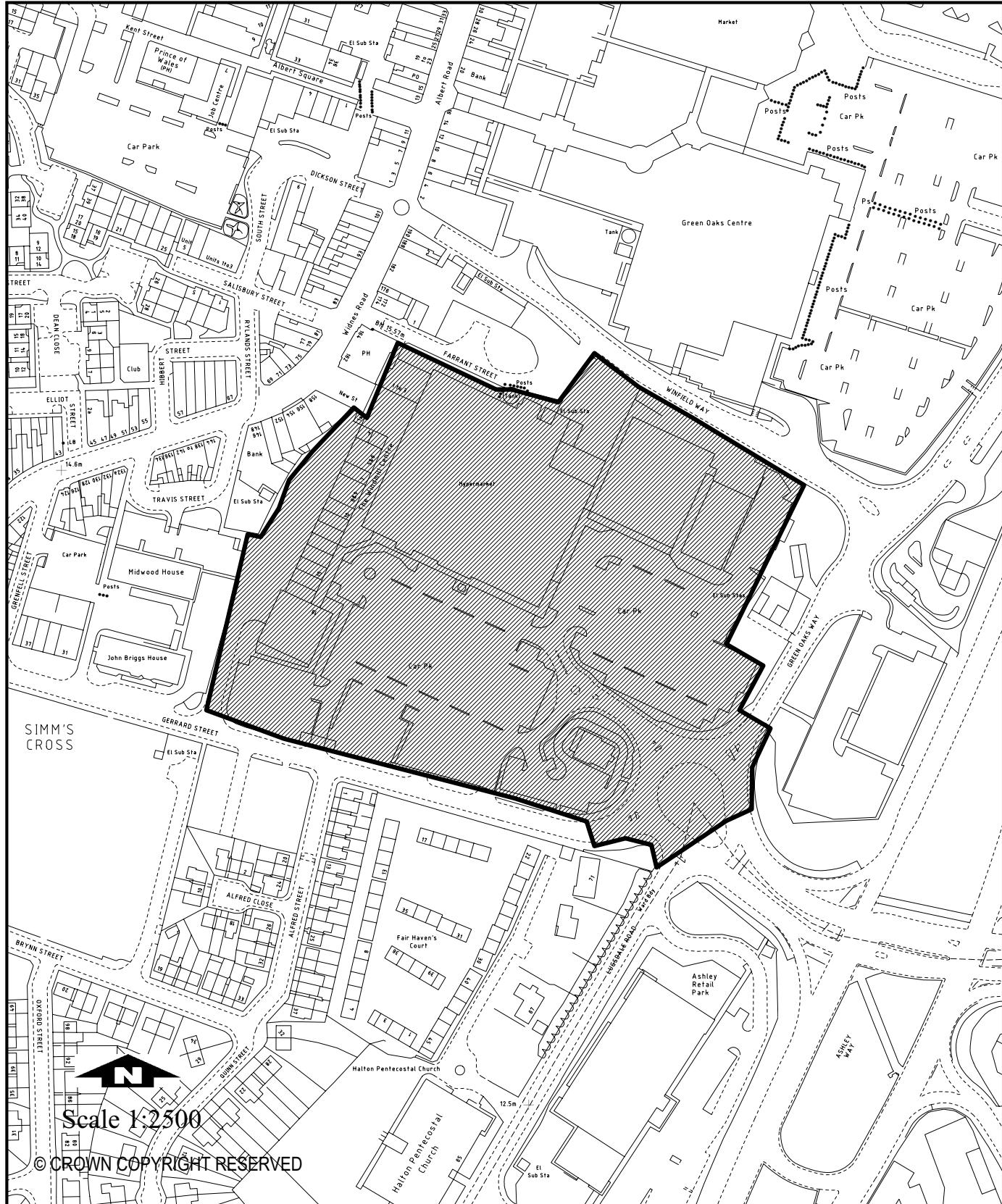


# PLAN 1a

## PLAN NUMBER 06/00883/FUL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12 February 2007

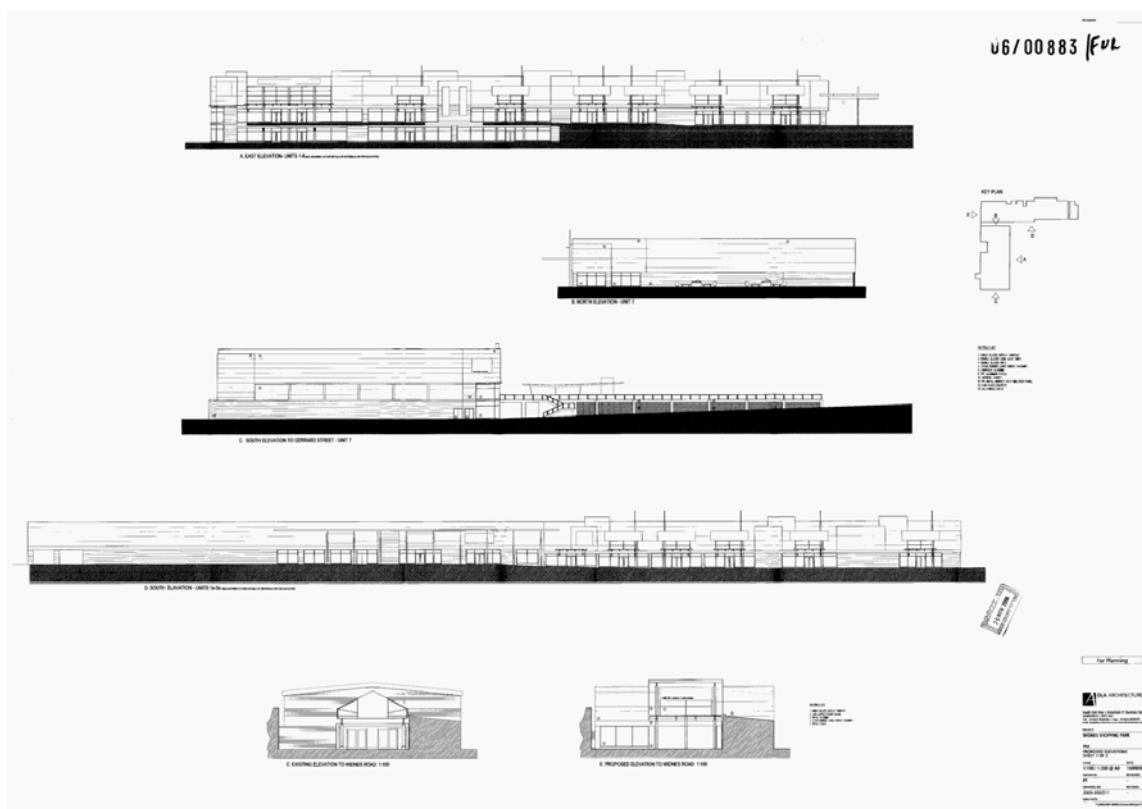




**PLAN 1c**  
**PLAN NUMBER 06/00883/FUL**  
**PROPOSED ELEVATIONS**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL  
COMMITTEE**

**12th February 2007**





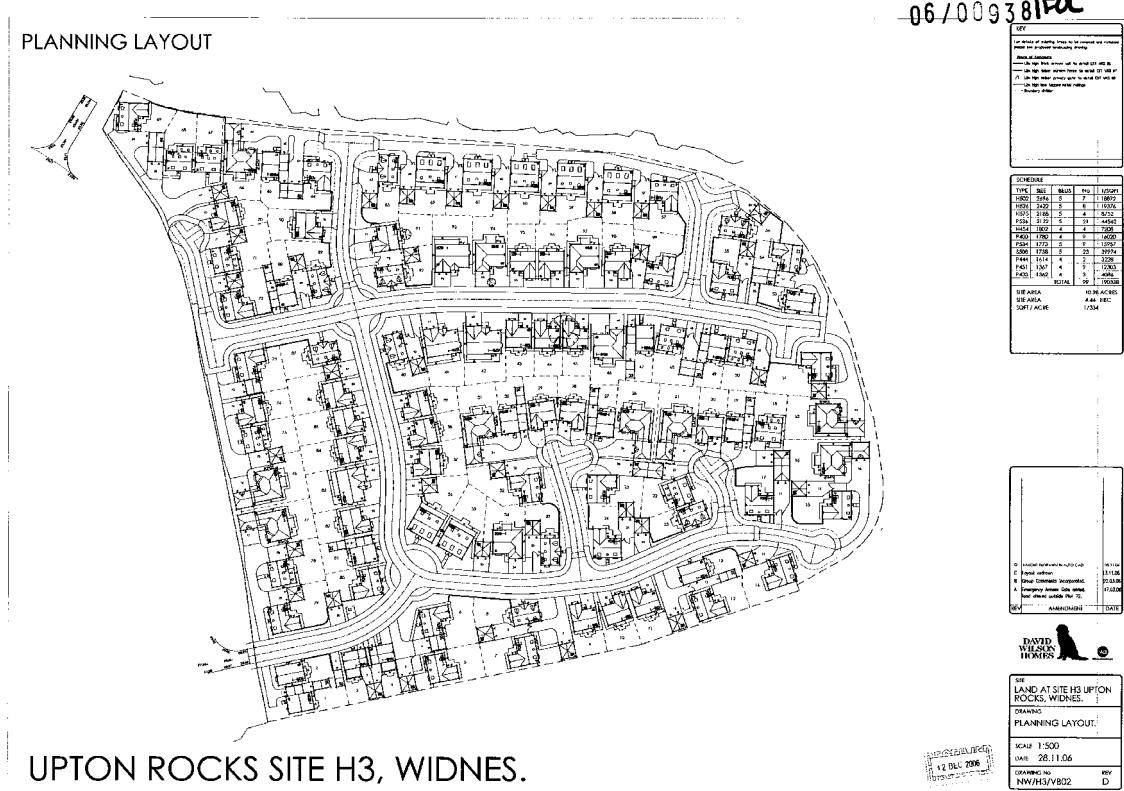
# **PLAN 3b**

# **PLAN NUMBER 06/00938/FUL**

# **AYOUT PLAN**

## **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

12th February 2007



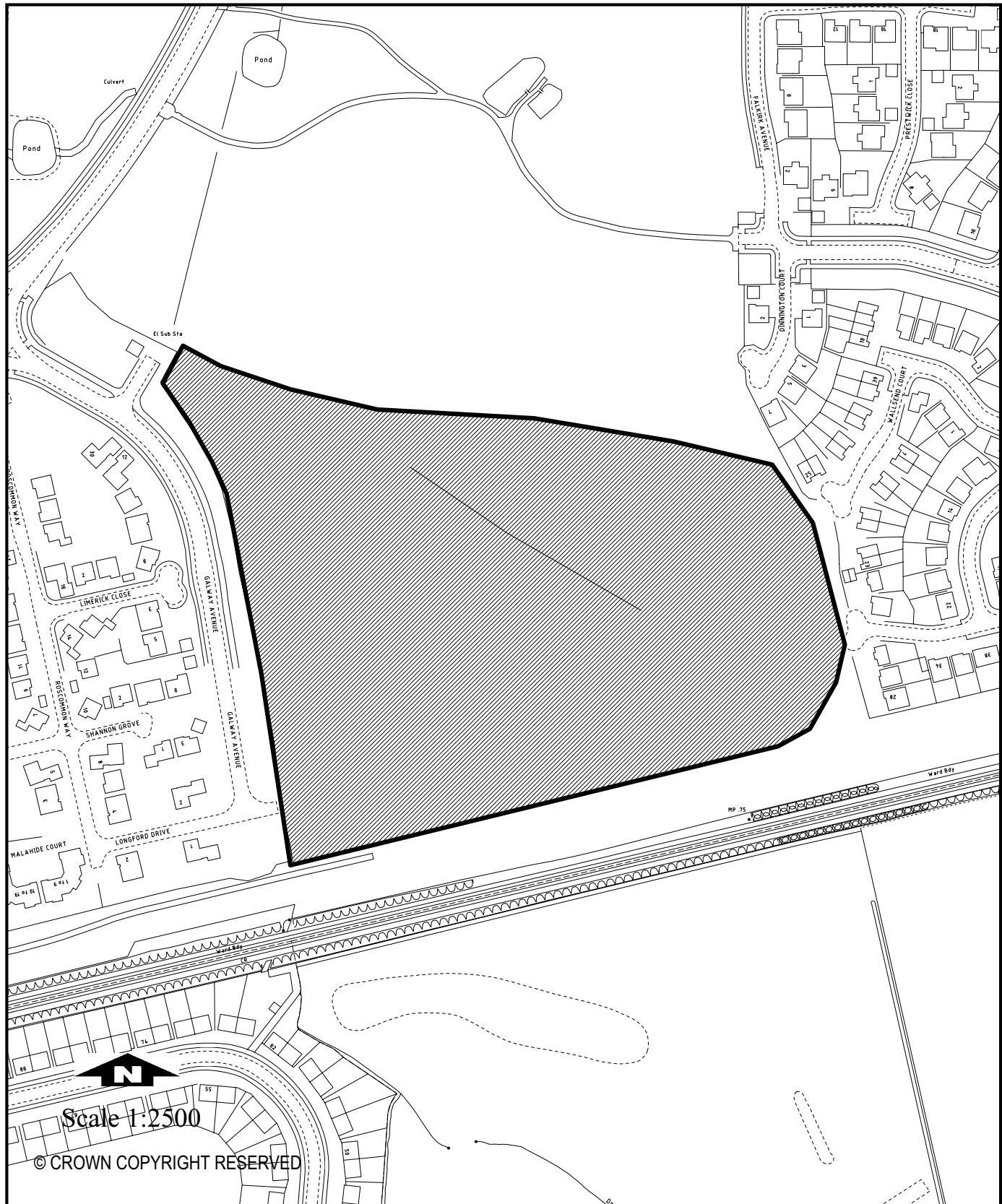


## PLAN 3a

### PLAN NUMBER 06/00938/FUL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12 February 2007



Scale 1:2500

© CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED



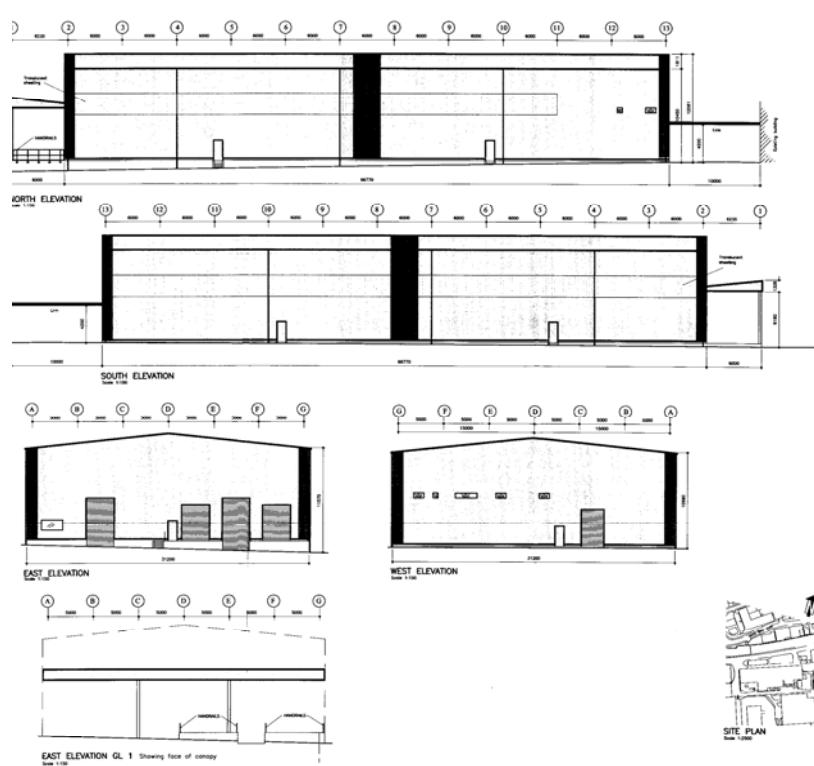
# **PLAN 2C**

# **PLAN NUMBER 06/00936/FUL**

# **PROPOSED ELEVATIONS**

## **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

12th February 2007





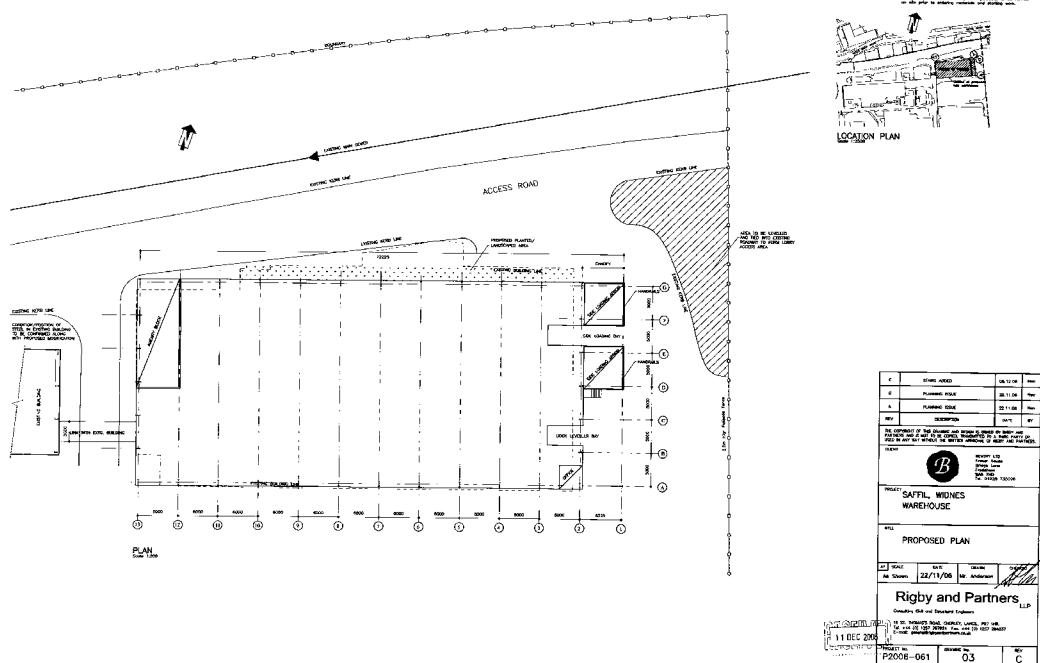
# **PLAN 2b**

# **PLAN NUMBER 06/00936/FUL**

# **AYOUT PLAN**

# DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12th February 2007



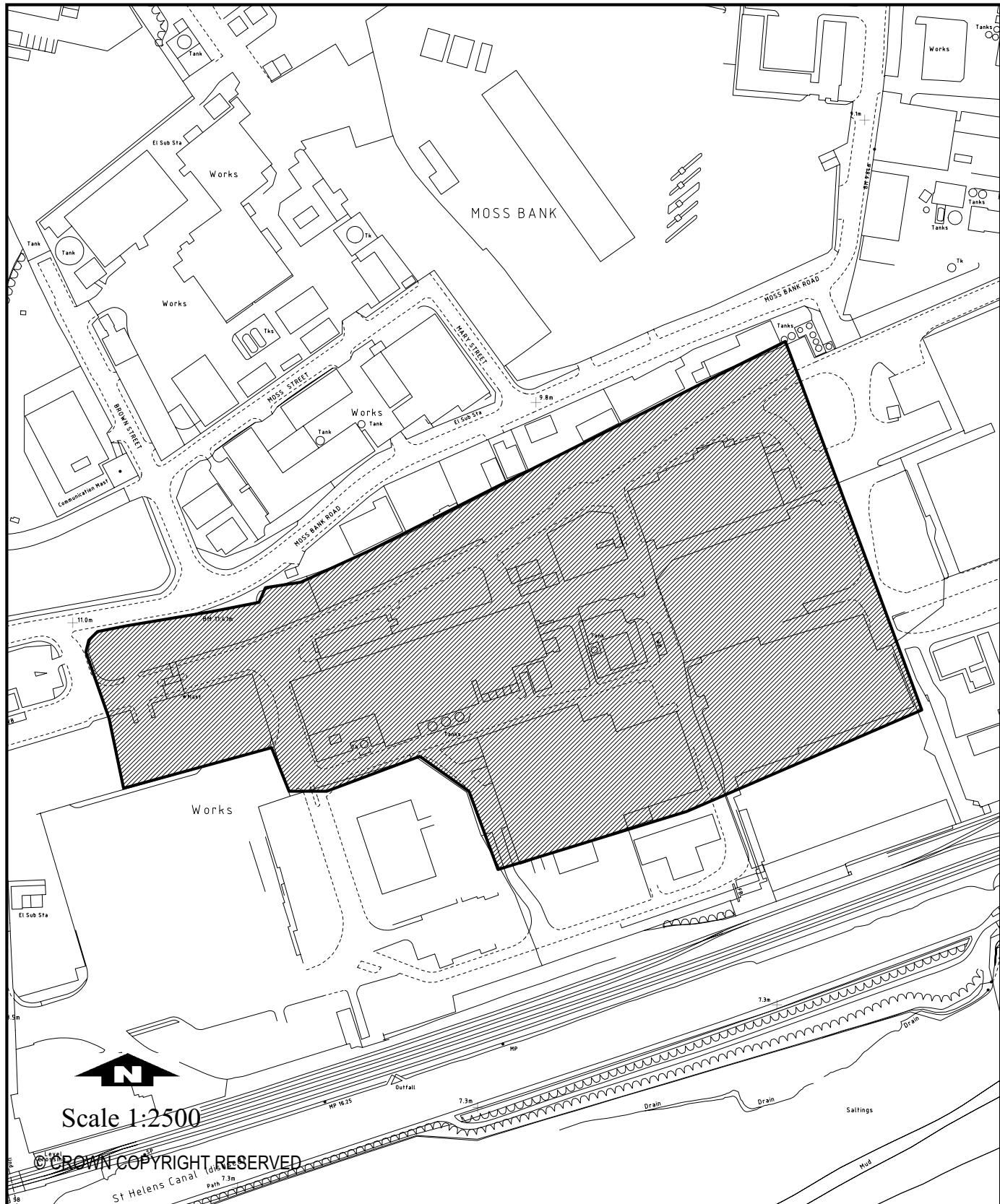


# **PLAN 2a**

## **PLAN NUMBER 06/00936/FUL**

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12 February 2007





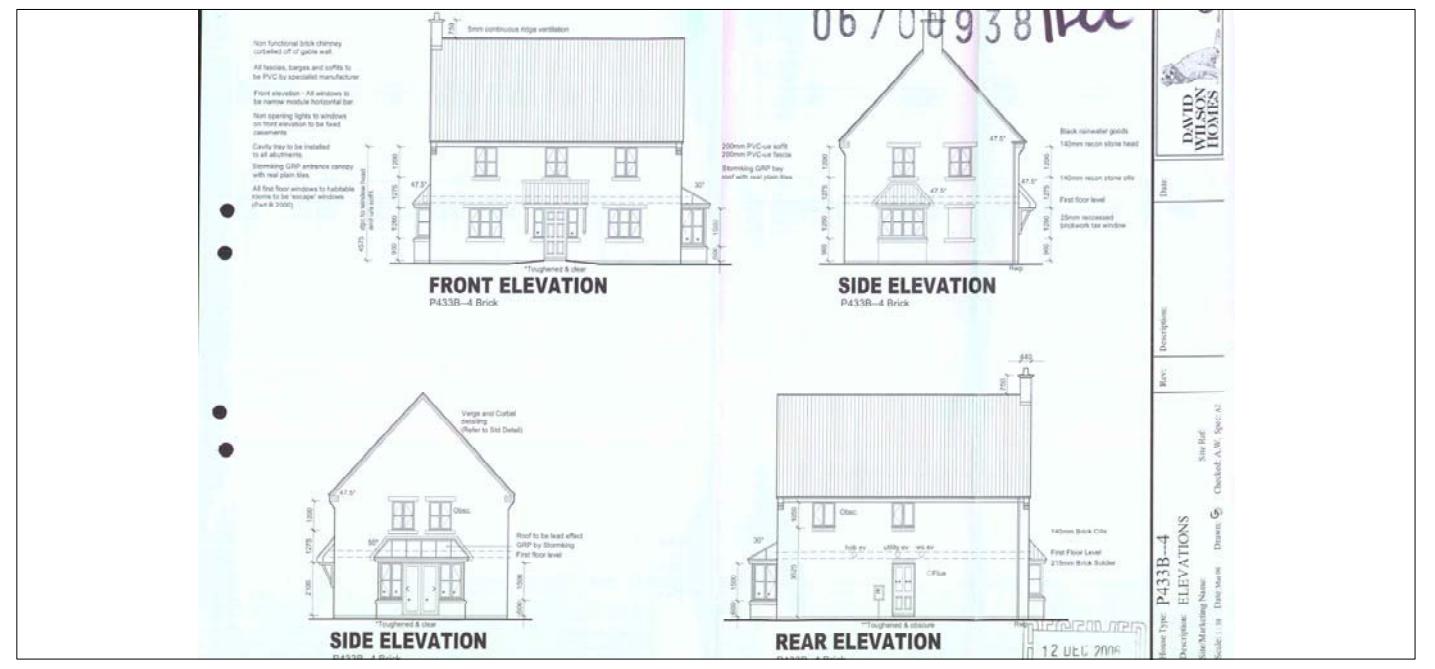
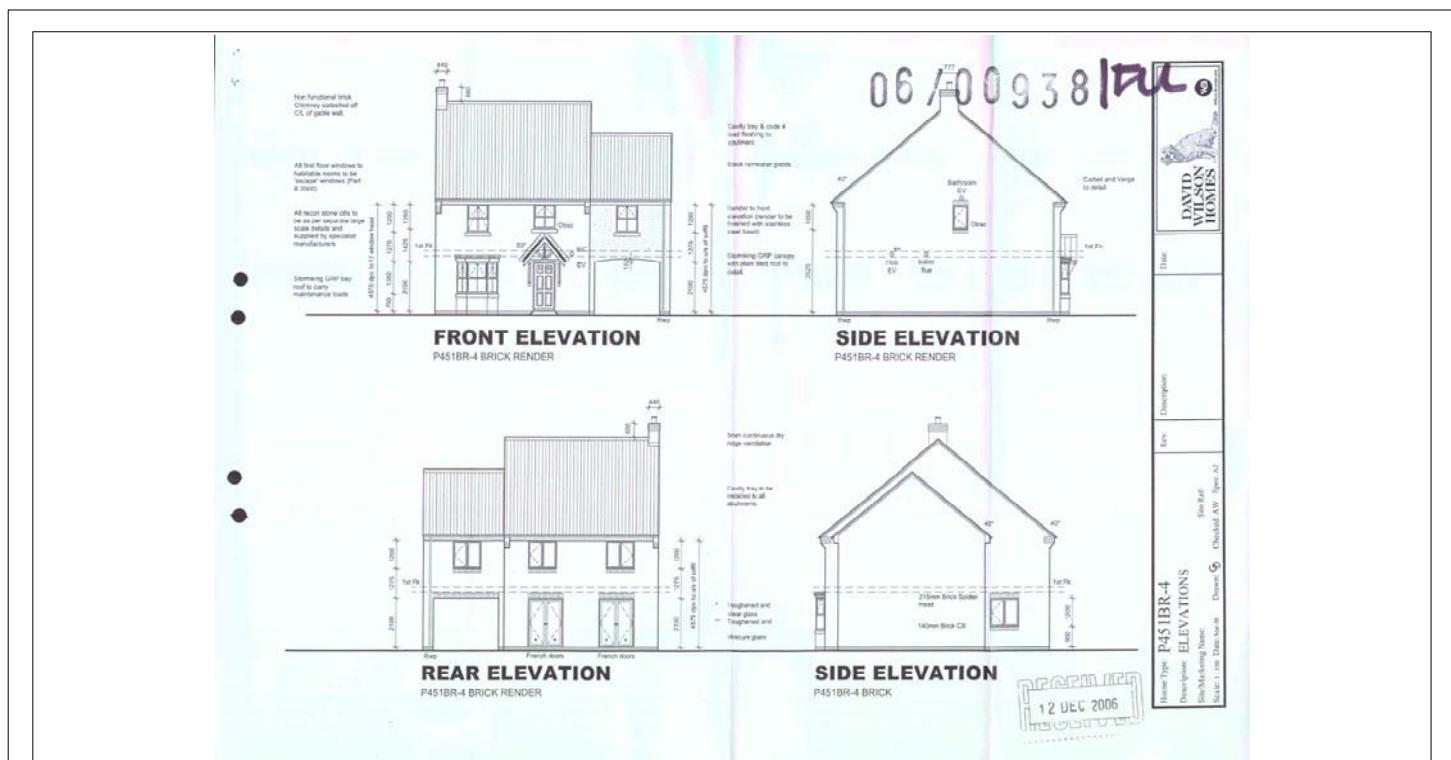
# PLAN 3c

## PLAN NUMBER 06/00938/FUL

### PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL  
COMMITTEE

12 February 2007



DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE  
AMENDMENTS/REVISION LIST

12 February 2007

PAGE NO.	LIST A	LIST B	AMENDMENTS
11		06/00883/FUL	
23	06/00936/FUL		
26		06/00938/FUL	
31	06/00929/ADJ		

**REPORT TO:** Development Control Committee

**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Environmental

**SUBJECT:** Matter relating to adjoining authority consultation

**PLAN NUMBER:** 06/00929/ADJ

**APPLICANT:** Astral Developments Limited

**PROPOSAL:** Adjoining Authority Consultation by St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council for a proposed strategic rail freight interchange on a site of 272 hectares at, and around the former Parkside Colliery, to provide:- up to 715,000 sq metres of rail served warehouse and distribution buildings, train assembly area, a container depot, a cargo exchange, multi modal secure access terminal, waste recycling centre, up to 18,600 sq m of Parkside Business Centre (B1 office space), up to 9,300 sq m Park Centre to include: - up to 4,300 sq m recreation and leisure space, up to 2,500 sq m (A1) retail space, up to 2,500 sq m of (A3, A4,A5) space for eating and drinking, Crèche, power generating facilities (including 1,850 sq m of ancillary buildings), a Countryside Park, new highway works including a relocated M6 junction 22, public transport interchange, access, parking, servicing, infrastructure and landscaping, ground re-modelling, the re-location of Newton Park Farm Manor House Barn. The application is an outline application with all matters except for access reserved for future consideration.

**ADDRESS OF SITE:** Land on both sides of M6 motorway between Winwick Road, West Coast Main line Liverpool – Manchester railway line and Winwick Lane, including the former Parkside Colliery Winwick Road Newton Le Willows

**WARD:** N/A

**SITE/LOCATION:**

The proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) is situated on land on both sides of M6 motorway between Winwick Road, West Coast Main line Liverpool – Manchester railway line and Winwick Lane, including the former Parkside Colliery, Winwick Road, Newton Le Willows. The site lies within the

jurisdiction of St Helens (Merseyside) and Warrington (Cheshire) (the majority within St Helens).

#### OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES:

The proposal is an adjoining authority consultation by St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council on an outline application for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, with all matters reserved for future consideration except for access.

The proposal is to develop a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, with associated infrastructure and encompassing an extensive framework of landscape and environmental proposals. The site in total comprises approximately 272 hectares. It would be connected to the rail network via both the existing West Coast Main Line and the Liverpool to Manchester rail lines that adjoin the site, and would include the following key facilities:

- Rail served distribution warehousing, totalling approximately 715,000 sq m.
- A container depot.
- An open access multi-modal transfer centre.
- Electrified train assembly areas, capable of accommodating international trains of up to 775m in length.

Built development units within the site would vary in size, with the potential for individual units up to 125,000 sq m. The development would also include:

- Parkside Business Centre – up to 18,600 sq m (B1) office space.
- Park Centre – up to 9,300 sq m to include:
  - Up to 4,300 sq m recreation and leisure space
  - Up to 2,500 sq m retail space (A1)
  - Up to 2,500 sq m space for eating and drinking (A3, A4, A5).
- Crèche
- Power generating facilities – including 1,850 sq m of ancillary buildings
- Water recycling facility
- A Countryside Park
- New Highway works- including the relocation of junction 22 of the M6
- Public transport interchange
- Access, parking, servicing, infrastructure and landscaping
- Ground remodelling
- The relocation of Newton Park Farm House and Barn

The development would include the creation of a framework of landscape and environmental proposals, drawing upon the existing landscape context of the site and the Mersey Forest and planning policy framework. The landscape proposals would occupy almost a third of the overall site area. The proposals would include a Countryside Park, substantial woodland areas, wetlands and water features and grassland habitats and an extensive network of footways,

cycle ways and bridleways with connections to the surrounding area. Visitor facilities, including car parking and information and interpretation would also be provided by the development.

The proposed development holds out the prospects of significant employment benefits although there is little clarity about how the increased employment population will sustainably be able to travel to the site. When fully operational it is estimated that it will create some 10,000 jobs on site, at least 75 per cent of which will be new to the area.

### Planning Policy

Central Government, Regional Assembly and Regional Development Agency all support the principle of an increasing use of rail for the movement of freight. It is also recognized that more Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges must be constructed to facilitate the modal shift from road to rail.

North West England Regional Planning Guidance (RPG13) provides advice on the delivery of multi-modal solutions to the conveyance of goods, people and services, especially at major hubs, together with effectively planned and significantly more efficient transport interchanges. The RPG promotes the allocation of sites providing access to rail freight facilities in order to avoid the unnecessary movement of goods by road. This is outlined specifically in Policy EC7 Warehousing and Distribution and T7 Freight Transport. In particular Policy T7 highlights the need to develop freight strategies including the provision of strategically located, intermodal interchanges.

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) goes further than the RPG and identifies four broad locations for Inter-modal freight terminals. These broad locations are set out in Policy WS2 – Broad Locations for Regionally Significant Economic Development. This policy states that the allocation of the sites should only be done if the Local Authority is satisfied that the prime purpose is for the transfer from road to rail and/or water. This site lies within the identified “broad location” as does the Ditton site in Widnes. It is questionable, however, whether or not at the time of the site’s original identification, the proposal would have grown to that now proposed. When originally identified the original scheme was approximately threefold smaller than that now suggested. A question of capacity and need therefore needs to be asked.

There are a number of inaccuracies in the Environmental Statement which also need to be addressed these are as follows:

- Although the site is recognised within the RSS, as one of the ‘broad locations,’ it does not take account of the capacity of the sites identified. As such the environmental statement has not addressed the capacity of the other locations identified in the RSS.
- When the RSS was drawn up, the reasonable expectation was that each of the 4 being considered was of around 2-300,000m<sup>2</sup> in

warehouse capacity, and not the 715,000m<sup>2</sup> proposed here. The relationship between scale and rail traffic generation is particularly important. It is generally assumed that for a site to play a reasonable role in the transfer of goods from road to rail that 255 of goods arriving will be by rail. On the basis of the typical mean no. of containers carried per train, the Parkside scheme would attract 3 times the number of trains that have been assumed in testing rail capacity. The obvious implication is that two thirds of the warehousing on site will not contribute to road to rail transfer as required by the Draft RSS. This green belt site threatens to attract traffic, which would otherwise locate at non green belt sites.

- The road freight assignments put forward in the ES raise questions. The overwhelming increase in traffic in the morning peak appears to be from the north. Given that 10,000 jobs are expected to be created and given the regional population spread, the model output showing only 30 more passenger car units on the east bound carriageway of the M62 is surprising.
- There are a number of inaccuracies concerning the Ditton site, particularly in relation to train lengths, that need to be addressed.
- The rail capacity undertaken for the proposal has not taken into account either Port Salford or Ditton, despite the fact both are further ahead in relation to the planning process.

The Parkside Colliery ceased operation in 1992 and the pithead buildings were subsequently demolished. In a proposed modification to the St Helens Unitary Development Plan approved on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1996 the St Helen Metropolitan Borough Council proposed removing 34 hectares from the Green Belt and allocating it for industrial use. The matter was considered at a Modifications Inquiry in September 1997 with the Inspector subsequently recommending that the Parkside Colliery remains in the Green Belt. The St Helens Unitary Development Plan adopted in July 1998 identifies the site as Green Belt. According to Government Planning Policy the proposal is classed as inappropriate development, as defined by Paragraph 2.4 of PPG2. It is for the determining authorities to consider whether the harm caused by the inappropriate development in the Green Belt is outweighed by other considerations.

In respect of the development status, Parkside differs substantially from Ditton, in so far that the Ditton proposal is allocated in an approved plan.

### Transport

The proposal is not expected to have a significant traffic or transportation impact on Halton. There would appear to be 30 new movements per peak hour onto the M62 East bound carriageway in 2015 this is derived from an increase of 354 movements of which 8% would join from junction 7 (estimated from Omega study)

### Conclusion

The broad location of the former Parkside Colliery is clearly identified in draft Regional Spatial Strategy together with the site at Ditton, Widnes for proposed inter-modal freight terminals. These will contribute , together with other inter-modal sites at Birkenhead and South West Manchester to 'regionally significant economic development'.

Although these sites have not been named specifically in the current Regional Planning Guidance they are in conformity with its policies.

Therefore there is no need to raise any objection to this proposal at Parkside as clearly, according to RSS, there is room for four intermodal freight terminals to meet the need identified. However the scale of the proposal at Parkside needs further justification

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That St Helens MBC be advised that whilst no objection is raised to the principle of an intermodal facility at Parkside, it would ask that the anomalies identified within the submission be addressed and the points raised within this report be considered.

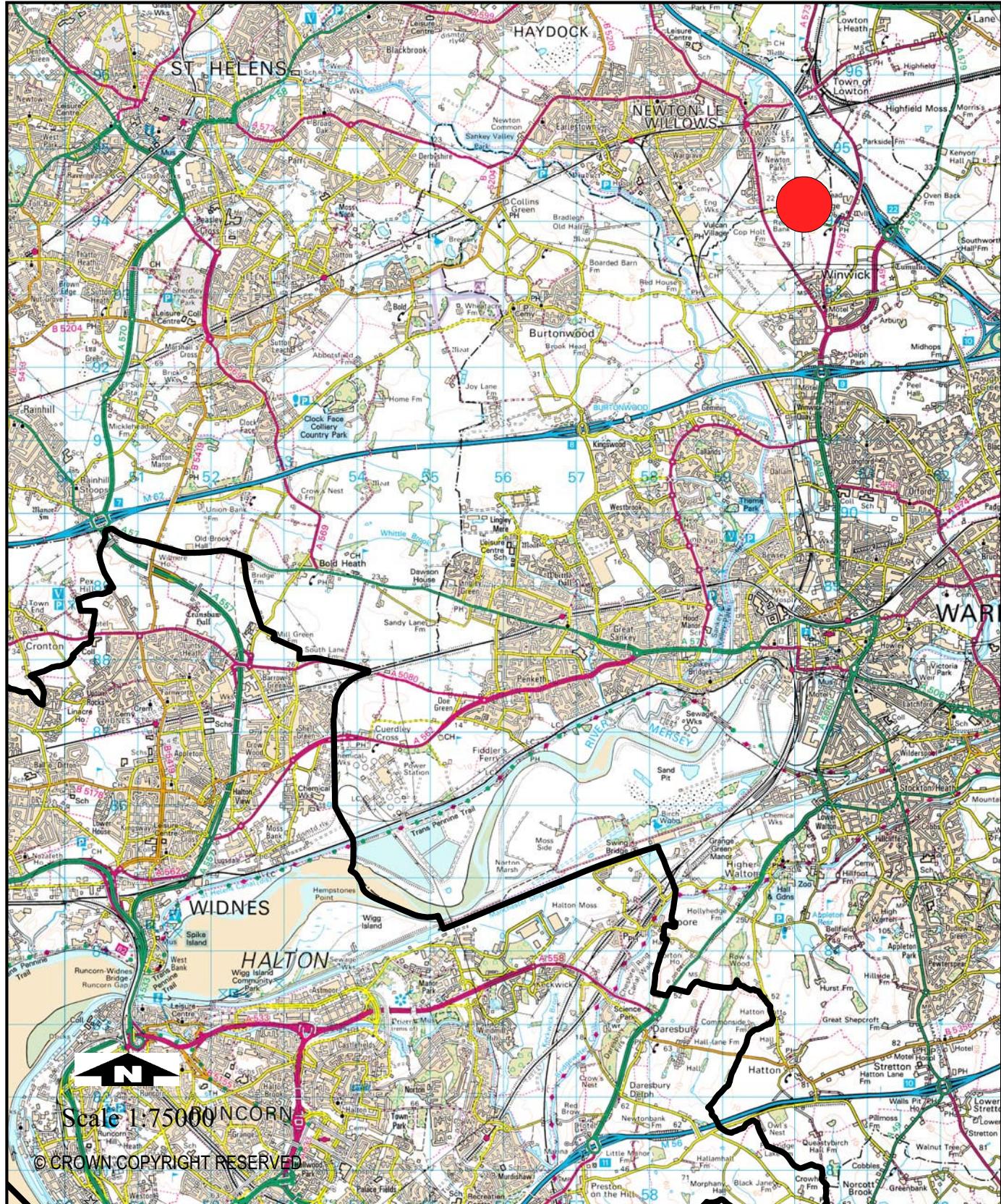


## PLAN 4a

### PLAN NUMBER 06/00929/ADJ

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12 February 2007



**MATTER RELATING TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER**

**REPORT TO:** Development Control Committee

**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Environmental

**SUBJECT:** Confirmation of Tree Preservation Order No. 110

**WARDS:** Heath

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider an objection made to The Heath, Runcorn No. 4 (TPO 107) Tree Preservation Order 2006, and to decide whether it should be confirmed.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED:** That the order is confirmed without modification.

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Application 06/00594/OUT for the proposed creation of up to 17,350 square metres of new B1 business accommodation across 8 No. individual sites at the Heath Business and Technical Park was approved by this committee at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2006. The plans showed which trees would have to be felled and which trees should be retained and incorporated into the development. A tree preservation order (TPO) was subsequently made under delegated powers on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2006, so that the most significant of those trees shown for retention are now subject to statutory protection.

3.2 Under Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999, any affected person may submit objections in writing before a specified date. The local authority must then consider these before deciding whether the order should be confirmed, that is made permanent.

3.3 One letter of objection was received, from the BE Group, as agents for the landowner of the Heath Business and Technical Park, SOG Ltd. The reasons given for the objection are:-

- The TPO conflicts with the planning permission that has been granted and may inhibit development of the site.
- There is a condition attached to the planning permission requiring a full tree survey, an arboricultural method statement and a tree protection plan. The landowner considers that this condition is more appropriate as a method of controlling the treatment of existing trees.

- The TPO imposes an unacceptable constraint on SOG's ongoing landscape maintenance programme and prevents the active management of the existing trees.

3.4 The Council's Trees & Woodlands Officer has commented that:-

- The TPO covers only those trees which have been shown for retention in the outline plans. It does not conflict in any way with the permission granted and should not inhibit development of the site. Detailed planning applications will be considered in due course and, should it be decided that some of the protected trees require removal to achieve the wider objectives of the scheme, the detailed planning consent will overrule the TPO.
- The TPO gives the important trees on the campus much stronger protection than the condition that was attached to the outline planning permission. It means that the trees must be given due consideration during the design process and prohibits unauthorised felling before detailed plans are approved.
- The TPO does impose a constraint on the landscape maintenance programme, but this should be seen in a positive light and would not prevent any necessary work. Subject to the usual procedures for protected trees, permission would be given to carry out any agreed works that are in accordance with good arboricultural practice.
- The making and confirming of a TPO is fully justified in these circumstances and in accordance with the best practice guidelines issued by Government.

**4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The making of tree preservation orders to protect trees of public amenity value on potential development sites is in accordance with policies contained in the Halton UDP (BE1 & GE27) and the Natural Assets Strategy (5 & 8). There are no financial or other implications.

**5.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

5.1 The Heath, Runcorn No. 4 (TPO 110) Tree Preservation Order 2006  
Letter of objection from BE Group, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2006

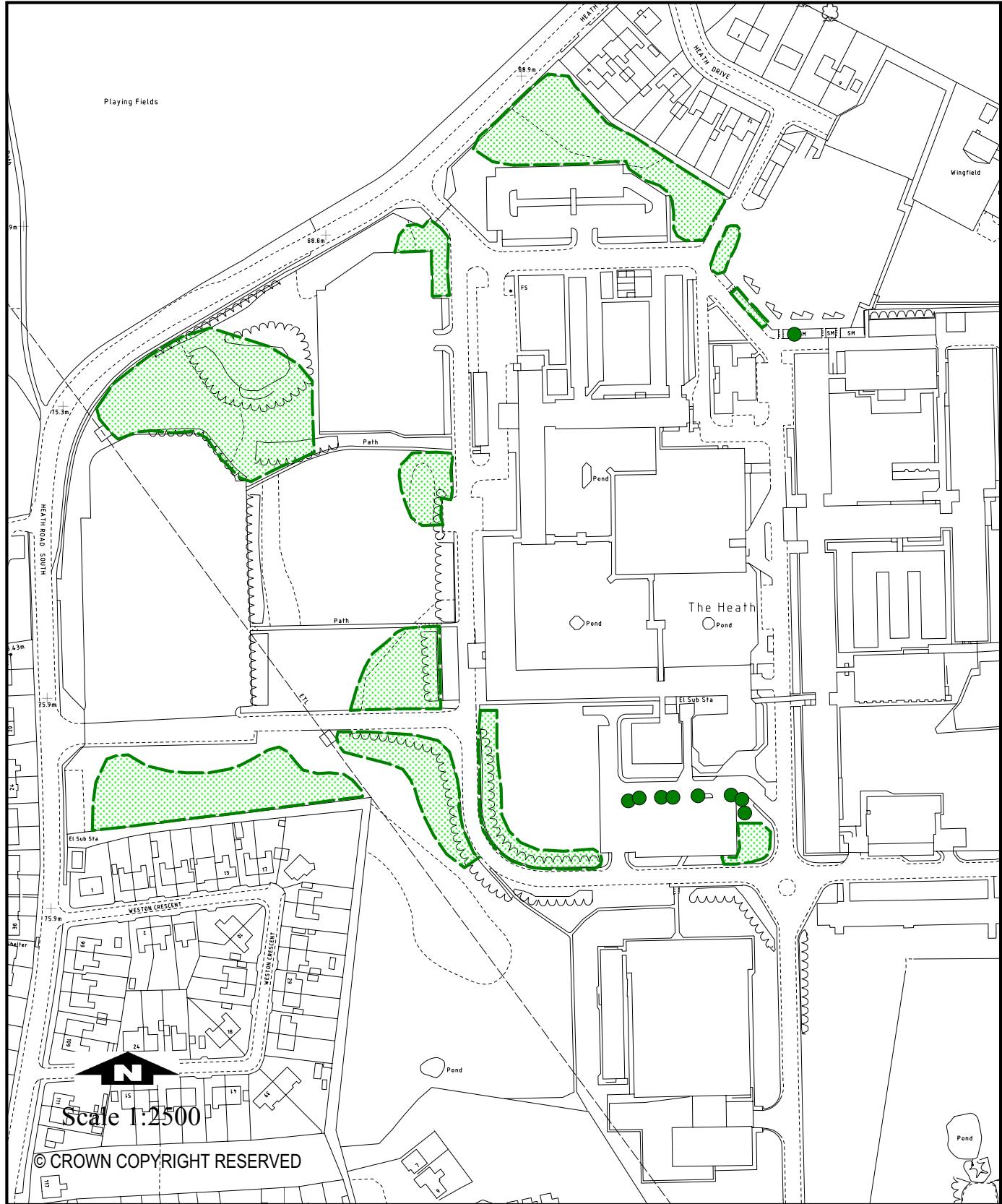


## PLAN 5a

### PLAN NUMBER TPO110

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12 February 2007



**REPORT TO:** Development Control Committee

**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Environment

**SUBJECT:** Miscellaneous Items

**1)** An appeal has been received following the Council's refusal of the following application:-

06/00384/TEL Application for prior approval for 12.5m high monopole accommodating 3 No. antennas, 1 No.300mm dish antenna radio equipment housing and ancillary development at Grass verge off Tower Lane Runcorn Cheshire

**2)** The following applications have been withdrawn :-

06/00730/FUL Proposed four storey mixed use development including 2 No. ground floor business (Class B1) units, 16 No. 1 bed apartments, associated car parking and landscaping at Former Tabu Nightclub 4-8 Victoria Road Widnes Cheshire

06/00881/FUL Proposed two storey extension to existing travelodge at Fiddlers Ferry Road Widnes Cheshire

06/00897/COU Proposed change of use from part residential and part retail (Water Garden Centre) to residential and alteration to/extension of Harefield Cottage Warrington Road Bold