

TAYLOR YOUNG REVISING MASTERPLAN

Award-winning architect-planners Taylor Young were appointed in late 2008 to revise and update the Widnes Waterfront Masterplan. Manchester based Taylor Young, who were also responsible for the Castlefields Regeneration Masterplan in Runcorn, are being advised by BE Group on economic development issues and Faber Maunsell on ground conditions, transportation and flood risk.

Four years after the original masterplan was created, Widnes Waterfront has been transformed with over 285,000 sq ft of office and industrial space constructed. Developments already completed include Forward Point, Easter Park and Turnstone Business Park, with plans for a £10m leisure complex by Widnes Regeneration Limited well underway.

Councillor Rob Polhill Deputy Leader of Halton Borough Council, said

"The Widnes Waterfront scheme has moved on considerably since the first Masterplan was developed in 2004. We have now completed several schemes with many more in the pipeline so now is a good time for us to look at what we have already achieved and decide how best to go forward into the future."



Jim Fox, Director at Taylor Young, said:

"Even in midst of the credit crunch, Widnes Waterfront has the potential in the medium to long term to be transformed as an exciting riverside

employment and leisure led mixed use area, building on successes already achieved and the huge potential offered by proposals for the Mersey Gateway crossing immediately to the west."



A word from

COUNCILLOR
**TONY
MCDERMOTT**
MBE

www.widneswaterfront.co.uk

When Widnes Waterfront was first designated one of only fourteen Economic Development Zones in the Northwest of England in the early years of the new millennium the vision was both bold and far reaching.

In six short years the transformation of the Waterfront has been startling. For the first time the Waterfront has a high quality commercial property offer in the shape of Turnstone Business Park, Heron Business Park and Forward Point, the first Grade A office development in Widnes in more than a decade.

Local people and visitors are drawn into the area by the enhanced retail offer in the shape of the new B&Q store and adjacent Widnes Trade Park.

A number of major infrastructure works have been completed including the new signal controlled gyratory to simplify one of Widnes' busiest and most complex road junctions and help improve access to the Waterfront.

Environmental uplift has also been a key element of the Widnes Waterfront programme.

Extensive areas along Ashley Way, Earle Road and Dennis Road have already been substantially landscaped and work is underway to improve public access to the Widnes Warth.

Outline planning consent has been granted for a major leisure attraction encompassing a five-screen cinema, ice rink, and associated restaurants and retailing.

Work will soon start to consider the regeneration needs of a number of currently derelict sites which fall within the wider Widnes Waterfront Programme Area, now expanded to over 360 acres.

Finally, Halton's own landmark public art piece entitled 'Future Flower' will, soon rise above Widnes Warth, a fitting symbol of the rebirth of this once most neglected part of the Borough.

Tony Mc Dermott



Priority sites relocates North West office to **Widnes Waterfront**

National developer Priority Sites has relocated its North West operation to Turnstone Business Park.

The national regeneration specialist, which has offices strategically located in the North West, Yorkshire and the South West of England, has relocated the North West operation from its Dakota Business Park development in Speke, Garston, to occupy prime new business space at Turnstone Business Park.

Bill Skillki, Chief Executive of Priority Sites, comments; *"Since the establishment of the North West office in April 2006, we have firmly cemented our reputation as a catalyst for regeneration in Merseyside, bringing sustainable employment opportunities to the boroughs,*

through the delivery of high quality, affordable business accommodation.

"Our move to Widnes Waterfront will allow us to focus on projects on both sides of the Mersey, and in the wider North West region, and is an opportunity to underpin the progress we have made in Widnes to date."

Since the establishment of Priority Sites in 1997, the company has brought to market over 3.5 million sq ft of commercial accommodation nationally, of which over one million sq ft has been developed in the North West region.

Bill Skillki continues; *"We are very proud of the significant role we have played in the rejuvenation*

of key areas across England and we are 100% committed to the further development of Merseyside and the wider North West region."

Priority Sites is currently progressing the creation of a business hub at Turnstone Business Park, which will include high quality managed office space and meeting room facilities. The business park completed in March 2008 is already home to a variety of businesses including OMG Plumbing and Heating and Boulting Ltd.

Turnstone offers self-contained office and hybrid units ranging in size from 1,174 to 6,616 sq ft. All units are available for sale or rent, on flexible terms to suit occupier needs.

For more information call Phil Haslam on 0151 495 4680.



Chris Wright of the Forward Group and Simon Roddam of BE Group

Breakfast celebration

The Forward Partnership held a breakfast event to celebrate the completion of its £2.4 million Forward Point scheme at the Widnes Waterfront.

Guests were treated to test drives of a selection of the current Alfa Romeo models provided by the Mangoletsi Alfa Romeo dealership in Knutsford. The line-up of racy Italians included exclusive appearances by the brand new Alfa Mito and Fiat 500 models.

Simon Roddam of the BE Group was the lucky winner of an Alfa Spider convertible for an entire weekend.

Forward Point provides 16,500 sq ft of space across three buildings at the gateway to the Widnes Waterfront.

Major Step Forward for Widnes Office Market

Work has been completed on the first speculative, Grade A office space to be developed in Widnes for more than a decade.

Cheshire-based developer The Forward Partnership has delivered its £2.4 million Forward Point scheme on time and within budget. The development's 16,553 sq ft of flexible office space is located across three new glass and brick-clad buildings.

Situated at the junction of Tan House Lane and Moss Bank, the scheme occupies a strategic location at a key access point to the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone (EDZ).

Forward Partnership's Chris Wright, said:

"This is a major milestone in the reversal of Widnes' fortunes. For too long the area has suffered from a lack of investment which did not reflect its enviable transport links.

"Forward Point and the wider Widnes Waterfront development are enabling Widnes to punch its weight in the growing office

market along the M62 corridor. It's very satisfying to see the scheme come to fruition."

The office units are available for sale or to let, in suites from 2,207 sq ft, and are being targeted towards inward investors and local businesses. The scheme was officially launched at a breakfast event on 27 November.

Andrew Owen, a partner at the scheme's property agents Mason Owen, said:

"Forward Point's location and excellent build-quality mean it is ideally placed to make a significant impact on the local office market. We're expecting strong interest as occupiers witness the quality of the scheme first hand."

For more information call Chris Wright on 01565 832 500.

Heron Business Park, Tan House Lane, Widnes Phase II

Following on from the success of the first phase of Heron Business Park, Widnes Regeneration Ltd, the joint venture between St. Modwen – the UK's leading regeneration specialist – and Halton Borough Council, has recently completed construction work on the second phase of Heron Business Park.

The two phases of the £5.9m Heron Business Park comprise some 125,000 sq ft of light-industrial space and are a key element of Halton Council's Widnes Waterfront regeneration programme.

Phase two equates to a total of 19 units, totaling 73,700 sq ft ranging in size from 1,590 sq ft to 9,492 sq ft and has been built on the back of the popularity experienced in Phase one, where the final two units are currently in solicitor's hands.

Phase two provides flexible accommodation, suitable for office, light industrial and general manufacturing uses, with priority given to small and medium sized enterprises within the technology sectors. The units are available by way of a short term lease or purchase of a 250-year lease.

Heron Business Park has excellent links to both the M62 and M56, and forms part of a long term regeneration programme established by Halton Borough Council.

The project is funded by St Modwen, ERDF and the Northwest Regional Development Agency and supported by Halton Borough Council.

Dixon Webb and GVA Grimley are joint agents acting for Widnes Regeneration Ltd.





Wernick Hire expands into the Waterfront

Wernick Hire, the UK's largest independent hirer of modular and portable buildings recently opened a new depot at the Widnes Waterfront as part of its ambitious development plans designed to reinforce its market leading position.

As part of an overall £14m national plan of acquisitions and developments the privately owned hire company has developed a 4.5 acre location on what was the site of the old Clariant Chemical Works, which is centrally located on the Kingfisher Business Park off Tan House Lane in Widnes.

As well as building a modern 570m² workshop and an adjacent 170m² office facility for its own hire staff, the company has also refurbished the existing 200m²

offices that were used by the chemical plant into affordable office space, which is now available on short or long term let.

Wernick Hire operates from 28 depots nationwide offering a vast range of products, from storage containers and secure site accommodation through to 2-storey office complexes, temporary classrooms and healthcare accommodation.



David Wernick



Boulting Ltd signs three-year lease at Turnstone

Boulting Ltd has signed a three-year lease to occupy 2,348 sq ft at Turnstone Business Park. This latest letting follows plumbing and heating firm OMG which moved into 3,000 sq ft of brand new accommodation at the park.

The development was completed in March last year and comprises 60,000 sq ft of high quality hybrid and office accommodation. It is anticipated the scheme will create up to 180 jobs when fully occupied.

Bill Skilki, Chief Executive of Priority Sites, comments:

"This latest letting is great news for us. We all know the market is slowing down so it is very encouraging to see that the quality and affordability of our business space is winning out."

Priority Sites were one of the first developers to introduce the hybrid concept of business space into the Merseyside market. The unique commercial premises provides 50% of office space on the first floor with a ground floor that is ideal for assembly/ light industrial purposes, a

concept which is proving popular among occupiers across the North West.

Bill Skilki continues: *"Interest levels seem to increase wherever we develop the hybrid product. The units are really popular and the feedback we receive from occupiers who have moved into the space is very positive. At our Dakota Business Park development for example, we have developed eight hybrid units and seven of those have already been snapped up."*

Tony Lucas, Director of JAM Percussion, who currently occupy a 3,800 sq ft hybrid unit comments:

"We had outgrown our previous accommodation and there were logistical problems associated with operating our office from one building and our warehousing from another. The flexibility that the high specification hybrid unit offers, really suits our business needs and the generous space will allow for further expansion of our company."

The Turnstone Business Park development at Widnes Waterfront offers self-contained office and hybrid units ranging in size from 1,174 to 6,616 sq ft. All units are available for sale or rent, on flexible terms to suit occupier needs.

For more information call Phil Haslam on 0151 495 4680.

New Chairman elected for Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group

Paul Murphy, Chief Executive of Forum Technik, has been elected as the Chairman of the Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group.



Paul Murphy, chairman of Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group

In his new role, Paul will chair each of the meetings and ensure that the necessary actions are undertaken on behalf of the group. He will represent each of the resident businesses on the estate when communicating with the Council and any other external organisations.

The Steering Group was set up in August 2008 and aims to improve security and design out crime, upgrade signage to and within the area, enhance the appearance of the area, promote inter-trading and joint purchasing, and provide local business support.

Paul Murphy, Chairman of Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group, said:

"As one of the businesses located at the Widnes Waterfront I take a vested interest in the area as a whole."

"Through my position as Chair I hope to maintain the excellent business relationships that have already been formed and ensure we work together to help the Waterfront become a successful commercial business park."

News in brief

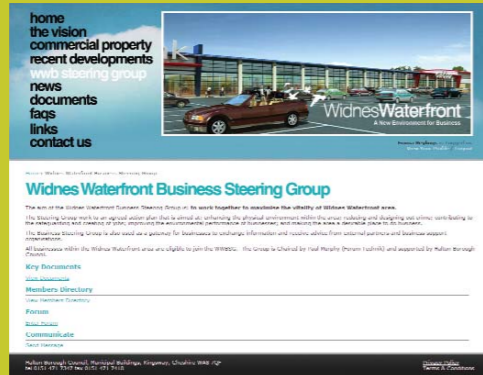


Website development

Widnes Waterfront has launched a new area on its web site for businesses which operate in the area.

It contains a number of key documents from the Steering Group including meeting agendas, information, advice and links. But more importantly it contains a directory of member companies to stimulate inter-trading.

To register for membership of the online Members Area and for inclusion within the Business Directory visit the web site and register.



Lighting columns

The street lighting on Moss Bank Road and Brown Street has undergone a

major improvement scheme. The new lighting is consistent with the style and quality of other lighting in the area, with minimised levels of light pollution to the night sky.

Carter House Bridge

As major improvements continue to areas of the Sankey Canal such as the Trans Pennine Trail resurfacing and installation of the Widnes Warth Boardwalk and information boards, the Carter House Bridge is next in line for a makeover.

Carter House Bridge is the only crossing point between the Widnes Waterfront and the Trans Pennine Trail and the existing bridge is fixed into position over the Sankey Canal.

Although the canal has not been navigatable since the early 1960s, Halton Borough Council would like to reopen the canal to the public in the future and to facilitate this a new, swing bridge will need to be installed.

NWDA pre-approval funding has been awarded to appoint the Waterman Group to carry out the necessary site

investigations and redesign of Carter House Bridge. The design will incorporate a swing mechanism which will allow manual movement of the bridge for boats to pass along the canal in preparation for its possible reopening in the future.

By reinstating Carter House Bridge as a swing bridge, the Council is improving sustainable transport links whilst facilitating the initial movement towards the Canal's reopening. The Sankey Canal Restoration Society (SCARS) is supporting the proposed bridge replacement.

SmartWater signs

Over 100 signs are to be installed throughout the Widnes Waterfront area to help deter criminal activity by showing that the businesses' high value and portable equipment are protected using the SmartWater system.

So far over seventy five businesses have been issued with SmartWater Kits which use an invisible liquid which contains a unique code registered to one specific owner.

The kits are being distributed by the Waterfront Business Steering Group as part of its ongoing drive to build strong business community spirit.

For more information or for a kit contact Steve Clark on 01928 516 124.



Advanced directional signage

New signage has been installed at nine strategic locations across Widnes to help direct customers, visitors and employees to the Waterfront.



Moss Bank linear park opens up

Work is now complete on the newly formed Moss Bank Linear Park, located at the former railway line off Tanhouse Lane.



The site has been cleared and excavated for paving and tree pits situated at the main entrances to the park. A new footpath has been created as well as extending the 460 metre cycleway which runs from Spike Island through to B&Q, acting as a new link to the Trans Pennine trail between Widnes and Warrington.

A shrub and tree planting scheme alongside recently seeded grass and wildflowers has been inspired by pioneering work by the charity Butterfly Conservation. The park has been designed to replicate ideal living conditions for butterflies such as shallow,

south facing mounds that soak up the sunshine and heat up quicker than the surrounding flatter areas. These naturally attract a variety of insects, such as bumblebees and butterflies including Red Admirals, Holly and Common Blue, Small Tortoiseshells.

The wildflower seed was supplied by Landlife, the national wildflower charity, and includes foxgloves, evening primrose, cornflower and red campion.

Widnes Gyrotory

Work is now complete on the Widnes Waterfront gyrotory, transforming it from a conventional three phase cross road system into a more efficient two phase system.

The new infrastructure allows for an increased traffic capacity and more lanes which together allow greater levels of through-traffic.

Landscaping of the gyrotory is also complete along with the installation of the new 'Widnes Waterfront' signage. New footpaths have been created to increase pedestrian access and improve the links to the town centre.



Widnes RUFC remains top priority for regeneration specialist

Priority Sites, is to continue to offer financial support to Widnes RUFC for the 2009 season.

The developer, who recently completed 60,000 sq ft of quality business accommodation at Turnstone Business Park on Widnes Waterfront, presented brand new kits to the 1st team recently, to cement their continued commitment to the club.

Bill Skilki comments: *"We have long since recognised the important role the sport plays here. The club really does sit at the heart of the community and we are delighted to lend our continued support to Widnes RUFC for the coming season. They are a great club and we are behind them all the way."*

Mark Cross, Club President adds: *"We are thrilled to have the support of Priority Sites for a second season. The club has made steady progress during the last three years under coach Lee McDermott – finishing in sixth place in 2007. This year, we have recruited well and started the season very positively, having lost only one league game so far."*

"The support provided by Priority Sites is invaluable and has undoubtedly contributed to our success to date, and for that we are very grateful."



Attention cyclists! New, safe places to store your bike

Attention cyclists! Safe places to store your bike are available at Widnes and Hough Green Railway stations as well as John Briggs and Midwood House.

If you live, work or visit Halton you can now take advantage of new cycle lockers which can be used by anyone by simply registering with Halton BLUG (Bike Locker User Group.)

To find out more and to register, contact the Neighbourhood Travel Team by calling 0800 1953 173 or e-mail ntt@halton.gov.uk.

The secure cycle lockers are part of the work taking place to create a hub of activity for public transport users and increasing the facilities on offer at the local stations. These complement the greenways network and the new re-routed number 13 which now links Hough Green to the Waterfront. The lockers have been funded through ERDF and NWDA monies.

Councillor Rob Polhill, Executive Board member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, said:

"Halton Borough Council is committed to supporting people who live, work and visit Halton to use sustainable modes of travel by taking the bus, cycling, car sharing or walking."

Further information

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Halton Strategic  PARTNERSHIP



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