

WATERFRONT SNAPS UP KEY COMMERCIAL SITE

Situated off Gorse Lane, in close proximity to the proposed New Mersey Gateway, the site is one of the largest parcels of commercial land to go on sale in the Borough for over ten years.

The site is currently occupied by Bayer Cropscience Ltd, which announced the closure of the agrochemical facility in 2007 as part of a restructure of operations. Bayer are due to vacate the site by March 2011.

In summer 2009, the Council will begin a masterplanning exercise to evaluate potential uses for the site, and create a detailed plan by 2010.

Councillor Tony McDermott, leader of Halton Borough Council said: "This is a major step forward for the regeneration of the Widnes Waterfront. The sheer size of this piece of land offers unprecedented opportunities in terms of jobs and regeneration.

"Over the next eight months we will carry out extensive analysis into the potential uses for the site, and put together a strategic masterplan which will complement

the diversity of the Waterfront's current commercial offering."

Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive of the NWDA, said: "This site is located in a key position within Widnes Waterfront and this investment will help to unlock its potential as a major new employment site for the area. The Agency has already invested over £6 million to take forward the transformation of Widnes Waterfront into a prime business location, and this additional investment will support further commercial development within the site."

Steve Tynegate, Bayer's Site Manager said, "Closing the site is not pleasant work, but to multiply the number of jobs here in the future can only be good news for Halton."



A word from

COUNCILLOR
**TONY
MCDERMOTT**
MBE

I recently had the pleasure of attending the opening of Phase II of Heron Business Park, a magnificent development of some nineteen light industrial units. Not only was it an opportunity to celebrate the completion of yet another new commercial development at the Waterfront but it was also an opportunity to reflect upon the transformational nature of the overall Widnes Waterfront Programme over the last six years. Often with a huge, long-term regeneration project like Widnes

Waterfront it is all too easy to forget where we started from and what has been achieved.

You'll recall that the Widnes Waterfront Programme was, from the onset, a mammoth undertaking with ambitious objectives, specifically the transformation of more than two hundred acres of low quality, former industrial land into a new development site of regional significance. Over the last six years huge strides have been made towards the realisation of that objective.

The completion of Turnstone Business Park, Forward Point and Heron Business Park represent a steep change in the commercial property offer in Halton, environmental improvements across the Waterfront have dramatically changed the visual amenity of the area while the creation of new roads, junctions and cycle-ways have improved access to this once sadly neglected area of the Borough.

With new business premises and a wholesale uplift of the area comes new jobs as companies, both from Halton and beyond the Borough boundaries, realise the business opportunities offered by the Waterfront.

While the current recession has obviously impacted upon the take up of new commercial space, not only at the Waterfront but across the UK, it is reassuring that, even during these trying economic times, a steady stream of new businesses have made the Waterfront their home. As the programme continues, and the Council and partners take up the challenges offered by the new Widnes Waterfront Master Plan, the areas attractiveness as a business location can only improve attracting further new investment and jobs.





Heron Business Park Phase II

Following on from the success of the first phase of Heron Business Park, construction work has recently been completed on its second phase.



From left to right: Richard Bakes from St Modwen, Cllr Tony McDermott, Leader of Halton Borough Council and David Parr, Chief Executive of Halton Borough Council at the opening of Heron Business Park Phase II

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 project.

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.

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.

Richard Bakes, Development Manager at St Modwen, said: "The success of Phase one, coupled with the interest we are already receiving for the second phase, underlines our confidences that occupiers will continue to take advantage of Heron's excellent location at the heart of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone.

The Gateway Inquiry

Closing statements were read out at the public inquiry into the Mersey Gateway Project at the end of June with Halton Borough Council summing up the plans as a 'unique opportunity' to transform the borough and help secure the future economic prosperity of the north west of England.



The main phase of the inquiry, which was expected to last up to ten weeks, concluded after less than six as a number of objectors withdrew their reservations, whilst others chose not to have their case cross-examined in public.

Timothy Straker QC, summed up the case for the project on behalf of Halton Borough Council at the inquiry. He said: "The evidence presented, in answering the questions set for the inquiry, reveals a strong and compelling case in the public interest for the Orders to be made."

During the public inquiry the inspector heard support for the project expressed by a wide range of businesses and organisations, including The Stobart Group, Peel Holdings, the Halton and Liverpool branches of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Federation of Small Businesses. Cheshire West and Chester Council, local MPs Derek Twigg and Mike Hall also backed the project, as do all political parties at a local level in Halton.

The Environment Agency and Natural England both withdrew their previously held objections, and it was announced

that the project had solved issues with a number of local businesses to acquire their land to allow the plans to proceed.

Councillor Tony McDermott, Leader of Halton Borough Council and Chair of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board, said: "We are very satisfied that the inspector has looked in detail at our plans. We believe our plans are robust and are confident that we have put the best possible case for this project to the inspector. This is a unique opportunity to transform the borough and help secure the future economic prosperity of the north west of England."

Alan T. Grey, the inspector conducting the public inquiry, will write up the findings into a detailed report. This will be presented to the Secretaries of State for Transport and Communities and Local Government along with a recommendation as to whether the project should proceed.

A decision is expected early in 2010. If approved, construction work is likely to begin in 2011, with the new bridge opening in 2014.

Flower Gets the 'Grow' Ahead

Designed by award winning architect Tonkin Liu as part of an international design competition, the Flower will feature perforated steel petals that light up with the wind. The petals will overlay to create a series of delicate, fluttering patterns, whilst making a bold and optimistic statement.

Subject to securing further funding, the fabrication of the sculpture, which will be funded by the NWDA, will begin in summer and is expected to be completed by autumn this year.

Councillor Tony McDermott, Leader of Halton Borough Council commented:

"People are often cynical about pieces of public art but we see this piece, coupled with the extensive public art programme, as making a real difference to the environment. The Future Flower demonstrates growth, civic pride and our belief in the area."

"To the thousands of people that work in the area and the thousands that will view it from other vantage points in Widnes, it will hopefully resonate change and an emerging future for the entire borough."

Anna Liu, Director of Tonkin Liu, is delighted by the announcement. She said: "At this site industry meets nature, with a stunningly beautiful light that reflects off the water and the mud plains. Our proposal catches the light and the wind, and marks a point on the horizon of River Mersey. The Future Flower extends our interest in natural geometry and structures that respond to the weather."



Kaltek Automation comes to the Waterfront

Kaltek Automation (UK) Ltd has recently moved into new premises at Heron Business Park on the Widnes Waterfront.

The new unit provides office and manufacturing space of 5,000 square feet close to the major motorway and rail networks, and within easy reach of Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon international airports.

The company specialises in the design, manufacture and build of electrical instrument and PLC control panels, including ASTA rated motor control centres.

Kaltek Automation (UK) Limited has developed a growing reputation within the panel building industry and their criteria of 'The Standard', 'The Quality', 'The Service' has become synonymous with its name over the years.

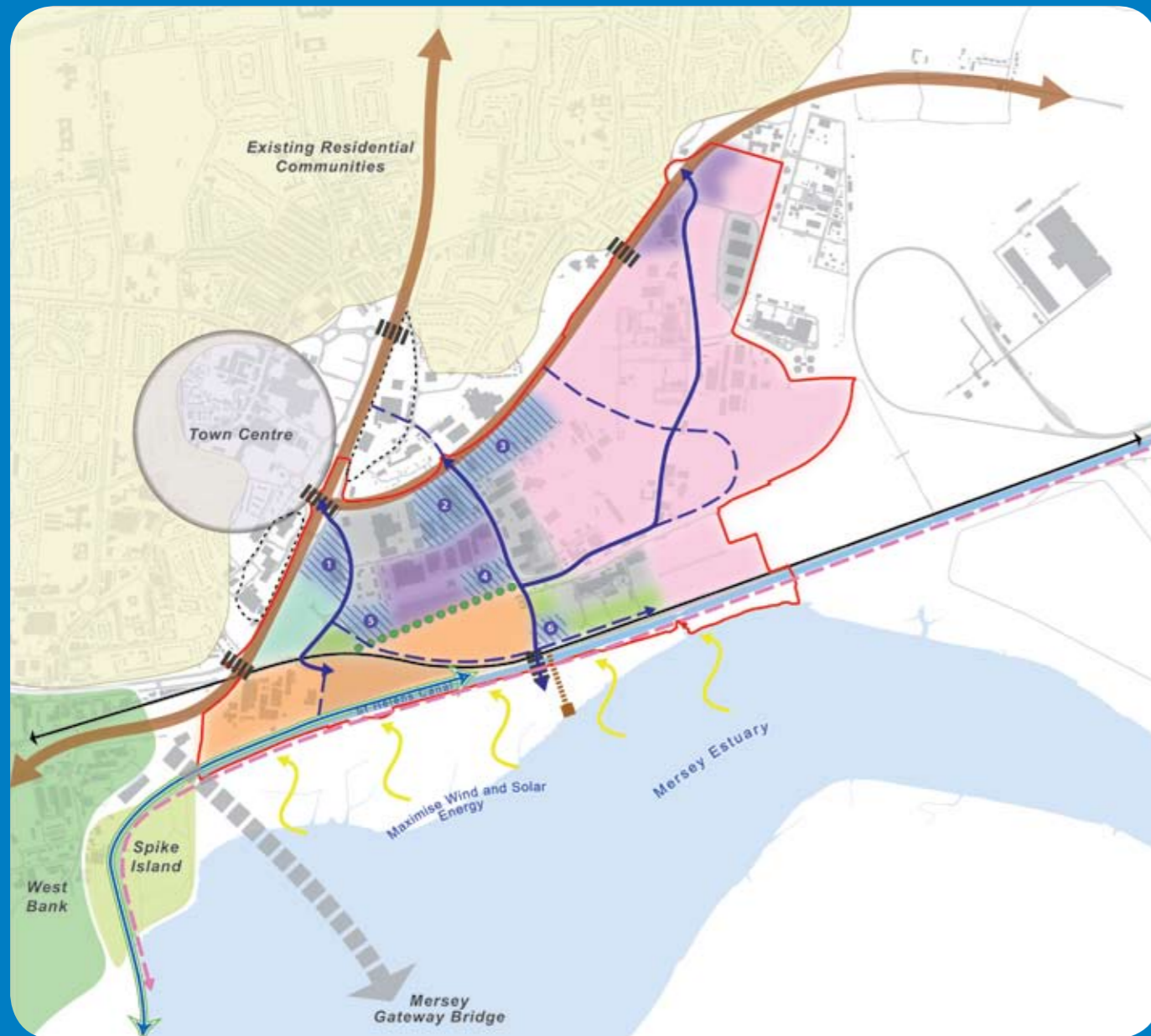
Its customer base covers a wide range of industry, including; food, chemical, pharmaceutical, water, automotive, petrochemical and manufacturing.

For more information contact Managing Director, George Brady on 0151 257 9136 or george.brady@kaltekautomation.co.uk

Enquirers can also look at the company website www.kaltekautomation.co.uk



Waterfront Masterplan Completed



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Key

- Study Boundary
- Residential (C3)
- Leisure (D2)
- Smaller Industry (Retain, Consolidate, Enhance and Expand) (B2/B8)
- Quality Office Space (B1)
- Public Open Space/Soft leisure (Sui Generis/D2)
- Retain
- Potential Contextual Development Site
- Mixed Use Development Opportunity
- Railway
- Improved Existing Link
- New Link
- Greenway (Designated Cycle Provision)
- Existing Strategic Link
- Trans Peninne Trail
- Mersey Gateway Bridge
- Linear Park
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing Point
- Potential Pier

Potential Future Land Uses:

- 1 Hotel (C1)/Leisure (D2)/Retail (A1)
- 2 Office (B1)/Trade Counter (Sui Generis)
- 3 Car Showroom (Sui Generis)/Office (B1)/Small Industry (B2/B8)
- 4 Open Space (Sui Generis)/Employment (B2/B8/B1)
- 5 Office (B1)/Education (Sui Generis)
- 6 Soft Leisure (D2)/Visitor Attraction (Sui Generis)/Retail (A1)/Food and Drink (A3)

Consultants Taylor Young complete the revision of the Widnes Waterfront Masterplan

The Masterplan Framework outlines a number of key design principles boasting an opportunity to mix uses and introduce a sustainable residential element to the Waterfront. It will also encourage greater usage through progressive play and soft and commercial leisure, creating a lively destination.

Landmark gateway developments and high quality design throughout the area will alter perceptions of the Waterfront. By consolidating industrial uses it will retain existing employment base and avoid bad neighbour conflict.

Enhanced gateways will be used to announce entry into the area and views into and out of the Waterfront will be enhanced. A new progressive leisure route will draw visitors from the Town Centre alongside enhanced boulevards and vistas to benefit the wider Waterfront area. Landmark buildings will be used to aid orientation around the area.

The new masterplan also includes the introduction of a new 5km fitness trail and 'green gym' alongside environmental improvements and tree planting along main routes. A temporary viewing platform could also be constructed so that people can observe the construction of the new Mersey Gateway, a £604 million project to see a new bridge built 1.5km east of the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge.

The Masterplan outlines a number of key strategic objectives:

- Create a sustainable employment-led mixed-use gateway location of long term regional significance;
- Generate sustainable employment in key sub-regional priority sectors, including energy and environmental, advanced engineering and materials;
- Support improvement of the competitiveness of existing employers and manage issues relating to 'bad neighbour' uses;
- Create a sustainable mixed leisure and outdoor recreation destination;
- Create popular sustainable neighbourhoods satisfying local and future aspirations;
- Develop a strong sense of place, open up the area's assets and achieve a quality built and natural environment; and
- Transform the convenience and quality of linkages through the area to both Widnes town centre and key neighbourhoods, particularly promoting sustainable modes of travel.



Business Steering Group Update:

Email Alert

As part of the constantly improving service provided by the Widnes Waterfront Business Steering group, subscribers to the member's area of the Waterfront website are now able to access an email alert facility.

Email alerts provide members with a range of information including business support advice, information on forthcoming events and also invitations to the Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group meetings alongside circulation of the minutes. In addition, the alerts will offer advice on crime prevention and also information on crime trends in the borough.

Paul Murphy, Chair of the Business Steering Group, said "We hope that this new facility will go a long way to improving communication between businesses from across the area and provide a fast and effective means of passing along important information."

To register for membership of the online Members' Area and for inclusion within the business directory visit www.widneswaterfront.co.uk

Bus Shelters

Following the creation of a new number 13A service last year, running from Cherry Sutton through to Widnes town centre and the Widnes Waterfront, two new bus shelters have been installed.

Users of the bus service, designed to encourage the use of public transport for employees working within the Waterfront, will now benefit from a new shelter at Moss Bank Road, adjacent to Heron Business Park Phase 2, and a new shelter on Gorsey Lane, in close proximity to Cheshire House, Shell Green and the Easter Development.

In Business, it Pays to be Eco-nomical

Groundwork will be offering free environmental consultancy services to businesses in Halton.

It will be offering a business support programme designed to help business access free support to help improve their use of resources and to identify cost saving opportunities.

Cost savings are made via the efficient use of energy, water, waste, raw materials and fuel consumption. So far, Groundwork's free waste/energy audit has helped to identify £7.13m worth of cost savings for over 300 businesses across Merseyside.

As part of the programme Groundwork also reviews environmental policies, and for particular projects can provide consultancy free of charge. Also available is free 'Waste Awareness

and Environmental Awareness' training to those companies who wish to sign up to the programme.

As part of the ENWORKS programme, businesses are encouraged to not only adopt responsible practice in an environmental sense, but also within the marketplace, community and workplace. A key strand to this support is to help businesses to become more resilient by implementing a Business Continuity Plan.

For more information contact Groundwork on 0151 726 2740 or email gwm@groundwork.org.uk



Retail Update - Widnes Shopping Park



Phase I of the new 19,000m² Widnes Shopping Park is well underway with the building work due to be completed by October and the new centre on target to open for Easter 2010.

June 2009 saw the wood effect panels fitted to the units, giving an impression of the finished look of the centre.

Marks and Spencer are the flagship store, with Next, New Look, Boots, Birthdays and Outfit also moving in to the new centre.

Councillor Tony McDermott, Leader of Halton Borough Council commented:

"This is marvellous news for the Borough and something we have wanted for many years".

The new store is expected to create up to 750 jobs for Halton.



Johnstone's Decorating Centre Opens for Business

A new Johnstone's Decorating Centre is now open for business at Widnes Trade Park, adjacent to the B&Q store, alongside other household names such as Screwfix, Edmundson Electrical, Dulux Decorator Centre and Plumbing Trade Supplies.

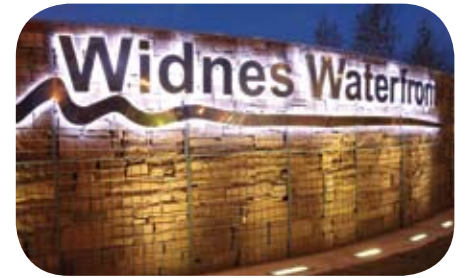
Johnstone's has a long history as a professional trade brand. The name Johnstone's has been a presence in the UK paint market since 1890. With over 15,000 paint colours to choose from via Johnstone's market leading tinting system, the new Decorating Centre stocks a full range of Johnstone's and Leyland paints. In addition the store now stocks over 200 patterns of wallpaper with many more available to order, ensuring every taste and budget is catered for.

Carl Fletcher from the Decorating Centre commented:

"Widnes Trade Park is a great location for the company. The Trade Park concept means we can provide a quality service to both the trade and domestic customer alike."



Widnes Waterfront Gyratory



The new Widnes Waterfront Gyratory is both the gateway to the Waterfront and Widnes Town Centre but also an important focal point along a key, primary transport route.

The key road interchange has been extensively remodelled to improve traffic flows and energise further the regeneration of the Waterfront through the creation of better linkages to the town centre.

To enhance the existing planting, the design features soft landscaping with gentle land form alongside avenue tree planting to create and frame different views around the gyratory.

The land form, feature lighting and planting, draws pedestrians into the hub of the gyratory. Pedestrian pathways cut through the land forms to allow a safe and more aesthetic route through the gyratory creating a smooth transition between the Waterfront and the Town Centre.

Throughout the scheme lighting has been used to ensure the visual appeal and functionality of the gyratory into the evenings, ensuring safe pedestrian movement to and from the Waterfront to Widnes Town Centre.

The gyratory has been subtly designed with two distinct sides. The first boasts gabions with stainless steel details complemented with formal cut grass areas and avenue tree planting to emulate the industrial area and existing landscape elements. The Town Centre Retail side has been designed with a softer landscape approach and includes gentle profiling and shrub planting to enhance this urban setting.



Further information

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