



Congleton Cheshire

Case Study: Residential Sector

The Project

Richborough Estates speculatively purchased the derelict 25 acre brownfield site in 2006 with a vision of securing residential planning permission. The former automotive manufacturing site comprised over 100,000 sq. ft. of buildings, woodland, numerous wildlife habitats and two water courses which presented a number of challenges to the master planning process. Despite additional issues with contamination and demolition, the Richborough Estates team was confident that this was a logical and sustainable proposal that would make efficient use of previously developed land. As the site had lay derelict for so long it had been prone to vandalism and crime. It was therefore of paramount importance to create a compelling proposal that would demonstrate the site's contribution to community regeneration. Congleton Borough Council was operating a housing moratorium at the time of the site acquisition and planning application.

The Approach

- An extensive and sensitive clearance of the site was undertaken, including derelict buildings and machinery and the UK's largest flatbed metal press
- Due to the nature of the site's use, a Ground Investigation Survey was carried out to identify whether the site has had contamination issues and a suitable mitigation strategy was developed
- A Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken to assist with a surface water drainage strategy
- Existing watercourses were modelled in order to consider diverting them to improve efficiencies within the proposed layout
- Working in co-operation with stakeholders, environmental planning and response measures were investigated to address the presence of bats and Great Crested Newts

The Result

- Approval for 130 residential units, which was the first planning permission of its kind in three years and led to the removal of the moratorium
- The diversion of two watercourses required to smooth out the bends to the river and mitigate flood risk
- Significant open spaces were created including a picnic and play area with disabled access
- A new footpath connecting the site to the surrounding areas
- The Richborough Estates team subsequently secured a new permission at appeal to reduce the affordable housing provision from 30% to 4% on viability grounds
- The site was sold to Bovis Homes in 2010



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Key Benefits

- 130 new residential units and the removal of unsightly derelict buildings
- Removal of soil contamination
- Preservation of wildlife
- Flood safety measures
- Creation of new public open spaces and play areas
- Links to and from the existing community

