

Big is definitely more beautiful...

■ Demand strong as ever for bigger sheds

■ Trafford Park offers easy motorway access

DAVID THAME

SUPER-size warehouses are back in fashion.

The monster warehouse units that dominate Trafford Park are once again finding popularity among the region's top business names.

Recent deals at so called 'big box' warehouses show that the area can still appeal to companies who want lots - and lots - of space. There had been fears that such occupiers would instead head for motorway junction sites on the edge of the city, or in Cheshire and Staffordshire.

Lettings at Merlin 310, a 310,000 sq ft speculative unit on Barton Dock Road by landlord Morley Fund Management, and St Modwen's letting of a 360,000 sq ft warehouse to Adidas on Westinghouse Road, show that demand for larger warehouses is still good.

As a consequence of its success with landing the Adidas deal and the limited opportunities left for big box development in Trafford Park, St Modwen has now changed its proposals for the adjoining 10 acres. Instead of building smaller units at Avro Park they now want to build warehouses up to 220,000 sq ft.

David Brooks, head of industrial at King Sturge, says that big boxes in Trafford Park are still very much on manufacturer's agendas.

"Over the last few years, there has been a great debate over whether Trafford Park is considered to be a prime 'big box' warehouse location," he said. "The likes of Kellogg's, L'Oreal and a number of major third party logistics contractors have developed large new warehouse facilities over the last 5-10 years or so."

"In our opinion, the deals at Merlin and with Adidas are clear evidence that Trafford Park is, indeed, considered by occupiers to be a prime distribution location.

"The rapid access to three motorway junctions; the availability of labour; the adjoining amenities and easy access to Manchester Airport, are all key

elements of this."

Rick Davies of specialist industrial property agency Davies Harrison says that the completion of the M60 motorway has helped to keep Trafford Park a popular location for larger warehouses.

"Whilst Trafford Park has not necessarily been seen as a big shed location in the past, improvements in motorway networks has made it more accessible which has led to occupiers such as Adidas relocating to the area as well as the letting of one of the Park's largest sheds, Merlin310," he said.

Simon Hampson of WHR Property Consultancy agrees that larger warehouses are back in fashion.

"Trafford Park is as good as it gets. It has retained its status as Greater Manchester's premier industrial location with more enquiries specifically selecting Trafford Park as the location of choice," he said.

"There is still healthy demand across all size ranges. In Trafford Park there is something for everyone; from down-market scrap yards to state of the art, stand alone buildings."

"The first phase of Beva's Merlin Park was very successful



GETTING SHEDDED Trafford Park keeps the punters happy with its seemingly endless space

with over 110,000 sq ft sold or let within months of practical completion and the largest unit on the second phase, which was funded by ING, has already been let to UTI."

Mr Hampson says that Legal & General's Central Park has three units under construction

ranging from 10,000 sq ft - 50,000 sq ft, one of which is already under offer.

"There is also great interest in the design and build opportunities available at Ashburton Central, which offers the only freehold opportunity in Trafford Park and as there has al-

ready been significant interest in the scheme, we anticipate a number of developments will commence before the end of the year," he said.

"In a tough market such as this, quality shines through and the old saying location, location, location becomes pertinent."

Trafford Park developer ignores credit crunch and ploughs ahead with plans

TRAFFORD Park's largest landlord says a development freeze in the south is not going to chill its plans for Manchester.

Last month Brixton Estates, one of Trafford Park's largest landowners, said it expected to shelve development plans later this year.

At the same time two senior directors left the company thanks to the lighter workload.

Both moves were in response to the slower property market caused by the global credit crunch.

However, Brixton bosses say that their Trafford Park portfolio is still attracting plenty of in-

terest.

Their ownership in Trafford Park totals more than 3m sq ft of industrial and warehouse space across 140 acres.

Brixton has just completed its 192,500 sq ft Premier Park scheme at Trafford Park and says it is already generating a high amount of interest from

potential occupiers. The 20-unit industrial scheme has been built on the former Carborundum site.

The scheme has already attracted its first occupier. Cablelines Pronet has taken a 10-year lease of a 6,862 sq ft unit paying a rent of £7 per sq ft.

Cablelines Pronet's Amanda

Court, said: "Steady business growth has meant that we've had to double our space. The prominent location of the Park, just one mile from the city centre was a key reason for choosing Premier Park."

Kurt Mather, director of asset management and leasing, said: "This will appeal to re-

gional and national distribution and manufacturing companies looking for an established, secure, high quality environment."

"Trafford Park continues to be Manchester's industrial powerhouse and there is strong demand for space.

"As the landlord with the largest percentage of industrial property in the park Brixton is committed to playing a key part in Trafford Park's ongoing success and our investment and long-term plans for the park underline this; our recent acquisition of Circle South Industrial Estate at Wharfside Way for £9.75m from Liverpool Victoria Life Company is a prime example."



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An Oasis in the midst of all that industry and hard graft

According to local developers there's more to Trafford Park than sheds and shipments, there's top class office space too, writes **David Thame**



MORNING GLORY A CGI of the Oasis development

THINK Trafford Park is just about big crinkly sheds? A local developer says it is time to think again.

Trafford Park-based Property Alliance claim that Trafford Park is turning into a top class office location as well as the region's premier industrial and warehousing address.

To prove the point they are planning to build almost 100,000 sq ft of new office space. The five-acre site at Ashburton Road West is already close to office buildings occupied by healthcare giant SSL and business information firm Yell.

Dominic Pozzoni, director at Property Alliance Group, explained: "Trafford Park is unquestionably a highly successful industrial zone, however, as an established Trafford Park office occupier ourselves, we can confidently say what a superb office location the area is.

"As the Trafford Centre has expanded during recent years, the area has become an ever more attractive place to work in. And the area is extremely well served by a number of hotels.

"That is why we have recently acquired Oasis, Ashburton Road West - a five-acre site which has recently received planning consent to accommodate from 5,000 to 92,000 sq ft self-contained office buildings.

"About a 200 metre walk from the Trafford Centre, the site is already attracting great interest from an array of occupiers. Many of the businesses we are in discussions with, are not currently based in the area, but are being attracted by the retail and leisure amenities and the immediate motorway accessibility provided to the region."

Andrew Timms, partner at joint agents Edwards & Co, said: "The site is situated in a highly strategic location which has already attracted major

corporate office occupiers including SSL, Bovis, and Yell.com.

"Oasis will provide high specification quality offices on both a leasehold or freehold basis, with the added benefit of ample on site car parking. It is interesting to see that the prospective occupiers are being attracted from an array of locations owing to the superb transport links and retail and leisure amenities for staff."

WHR Property Consultants are joint letting agents.

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Smaller businesses make use of the Park

You don't have to be big to find a warehouse in Trafford Park.

Developers are at work on a series of smaller warehouses and industrial units aimed at growing companies.

Construction of one new speculative industrial/warehouse scheme aimed at smaller operators is due to complete in July.

Chancerygate Business Centres is constructing a terrace of seven units, totalling 18,750 sq ft in the Village area. Units range from 2,500 sq ft to 3,100 sq ft.

The development, to be known as Trafford Park Business Centre, is currently the only scheme of its kind on Trafford Park to offer brand new units of that size for sale. Consideration will be given for offering units on a leasehold basis.

Richard Johnson, surveyor at letting agents King Sturge, said: "This is a rare opportunity for SME's to purchase their own unit in the region's prime warehouse and distribution location. Chancerygate Business Centres has an excellent reputation for the provision of small



Stock up for the future

industrial and warehousing facilities and I'm sure this new scheme will be a great success."

Colliers CRE are joint agents on the scheme.

The development follows Chancerygate Business Centres' success at the nearby CBC Trafford Park scheme in Colbalt Avenue, where all eight units were sold within six months of completion.

Chancerygate's Charlie Withers said: "The success of CBC Trafford Park in attracting purchasers and the high levels of interest we already have at the Trafford Park Business Centre illustrates the high level of demand for freehold property from entrepreneurs and small and medium businesses in the Manchester market."

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