

Business park looks set for first ever Encore

■ Continued growth for local business park

■ Quality occupiers reaffirm status

DAVID THAME

ANOTHER 40,000 sq ft has been let at Warrington's 123-acre Birchwood Park as the town's property market shows no signs of slackening.

The latest deals - including 10,500 sq ft let to cash processing business Vaultex UK - comes as work on the site's 103-bedroom Ramada Encore hotel begins. The 35,705 sq ft hotel will be one of only a handful on UK business parks.

As well as Vaultex, occupiers at Bridgewater Place include David Wilson Homes, the Department of Work and Pensions, wind turbine manufacturer Vestas Celtic and GB Oils.

Strategic location

Bridgewater Place was recently named regional winner of the British Council for Offices Commercial Workspace award. It secured for the park the Property Executive North of England Office Award for Excellence, and its architects BDP won a gold award in the Roses Design Award commercial project category.

Birchwood Park managing director Jonathan Walsh said: "Bridgewater Place is attracting the kind of occupiers and accolades that reaffirm the park's status at the top of the region's office market."

"MEPC Birchwood Park now boasts over 145 companies including Sony Ericsson, Atkins, Serco and AMEC."

Birchwood Park has mopped up office requirements in Warrington, thanks to the on-site facilities and the early start it had over rivals.

Will Lewis of WHR Property Consultancy explained: "Many schemes have attempted to copy the formula of Birchwood Park, however, it is not as simple as providing a free bus service."

"Birchwood Park has a critical mass of high quality occupiers, is located within a minute's drive of the motorway and the variety of amenities have continually been improved by a pro-active on-site management team. Birchwood Park is a destination in its own right, not just a business park."

"There are proposed schemes within the area which we have heard a lot about. However, in reality these proposals are merely pipedreams, as developers seem to be waiting



➤ **AWARD WINNER** Above, Bridgewater Place building at Birchwood Park, recently named regional winner of the British Council for Offices Commercial Workspace award, and below, Pacific House at the park



for a dream pre-let as opposed to having the confidence to speculatively develop."

Looking ahead

However, Mark Bamber, office agent at Lambert Smith Hampton, which represents Lingley Mere Business Park, said: "While a number of high profile business parks in south Manchester have struggled to attract corporate occupiers in recent years, Lingley Mere has bucked this trend."

"With 35,000 sq ft let to the

Office of Deputy Prime Minister for the North West Fire Control Centre and United Utilities taking buildings of 27,000 sq ft and 45,000 sq ft and MWH Ltd taking 9,044 sq ft, Lingley Mere has proved one of the most successful business parks in recent years and emerged as one of the north west's premier office destinations.

"Despite the current economic uncertainty, we are confident the strategic location of Lingley Mere together with the quality of the buildings and environment will appeal to occupiers. And we are in the process of designing the second phase of development which will comprise 50,000 sq ft in three buildings."

Services head east as prime site gets a new lease of life

HYPER-ACTIVE Yorkshire property developer Marshall CDP has bought a 16-acre site at the westbound Burtonwood service station on the M62 in a deal with operators Welcome Break.

The westbound services at Burtonwood are at Junction 8 of the M62, next to the massive Marks & Spencer store and close to IKEA. The 16-acre site has planning permission for employment uses, a hotel and a public house. A new access will be created into the site off Charon Way.

The westbound services at Burtonwood became surplus to requirements following the opening of Junction 8 on the M62, which means that the eastbound services can now be accessed by both carriageways of the M62. The work was due for completion this month.

The refurbished eastbound services will not only be capable of accommodating traffic from both carriageways but offer a wider range of retail and leisure opportunities from brands like KFC and WH Smiths.

Simon Marshall, managing



All change at the M62

director of Marshall CDP, said: "This is a major redevelopment scheme for the area, which totals just over 16 acres, and we are already in discussions with a hotel and leisure occupier for the hotel and pub site."

"There will be a phased start on work at the site because some parts of it require remediation. We are planning a range of detached industrial and office units, which will be developed speculatively, and these will be made available either freehold or leasehold."

Knight Frank advised Marshall CDP and Colliers CRE advised Welcome Break.

Developer holds Court at new Warrington base

CHANCERYGATE, one of the most active developers in the small unit market in the north west, has bought Cranford Court at Kingsland Grange in Warrington for £3.5m.

The 17-unit estate totals 75,500 sq ft and was acquired at a price which reflects an initial yield of over 8.5 per cent.

Chancerygate's Paul Jenkins explained: "The estate offers excellent asset management opportunities enabling us to refurbish and reposition this estate in the Warrington market."

"We also feel that Warrington is under-supplied in terms of freehold space and therefore

we will be offering units on a freehold basis as and when they become available. We will also be undertaking a major refurbishment programme."

"We are confident about the freehold market in the north west because of the success that we have had at our freehold small unit schemes in Trafford Park and Irlam where demand for this type of product has been strong."

The vendor was represented by CBRE and Chancerygate was advised by Horton Estate and the Manchester office of top 10 real estate agency Colliers CRE.

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