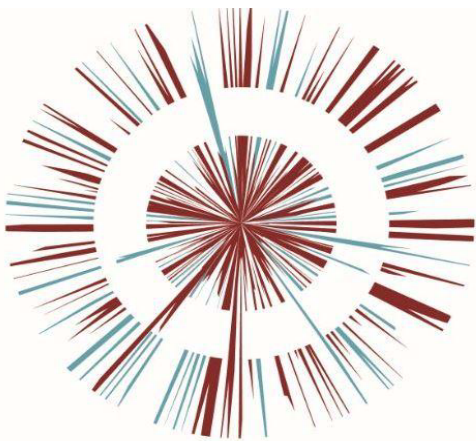




OMEGA ZONE 8, ST HELENS

Omega St Helens Ltd / T J Morris Ltd



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Environmental Statement Volume 1 - Main Text
OPP DOC.11.2 Chapter 2: The Existing Site





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2 THE EXISTING SITE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1. This chapter provides an overview of both the application site (**Figure 1.2**) and the surrounding area. **Table 2-1** provides an overview of key environmental receptors to the Proposed Development, alongside a brief description of those changes arising from the Proposed Development they are likely to experience. An overview of the environmental constraints is shown on **Figure 2.1**. Further technical data is provided within the technical chapters 6 – 16.
- 2.1.2. The application site comprises an area of approximately 75 ha and is located west of the existing Omega Business Park, approximately 2 km west of the M62 Junction 8 at its centre point. The OS Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the application site is National Grid Reference SJ 55146 90396. The application site location is illustrated in **Figure 1.1**.

2.2 CURRENT LAND USE

- 2.2.1. The locality of the application site is of an arable nature with adjoining agricultural and industrial land uses. The Proposed Development is situated immediately west of the Omega Business Park and Lingley Mere Business Park. The Omega Business Park houses a variety of large scale warehousing and industrial businesses, whereas the Lingley Mere Business Park comprises a mixture of office buildings and small local businesses.
- 2.2.2. The application site is bound by the M62 between Junction 7 and 8 to the north, with arable land located beyond and to the south and west with scattered areas of deciduous woodland priority habitats.
- 2.2.3. Mersey Valley Golf & Country Club and residential area of Lingley Green are also located south of the Proposed Development.

POPULATION AND SETTLEMENTS

- 2.2.4. The town centres of St. Helens and Warrington are located 5.5 km north west and 5.2 km south east of the application site respectively.
- 2.2.5. There are several residential areas surrounding the application site, including: Lingley Green (370 m south east), Clock Face (1 km north west), Bold Health (1.5 km south-west) and Westbrook (1.8 km east).

TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.2.6. The application site comprises of flat arable land, approximately 25m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), formed of irregular medium sized fields. A number of field boundaries are open; however, some hedgerows are present, linking woodland blocks of varying size and shape. Ditches and small ponds a common feature across the application site.

UTILITIES

- 2.2.7. An ESSAR owned ethylene pipeline, operated by Penspen, runs underground into the application site for 160 m from the north east corner before splitting into two pipelines. One pipeline travels south following the boundary of the application site, the other pipeline continues in a south east direction passing south of Booth's Wood and out of the application site.

- 2.2.8. Overhead electricity distribution lines run 150 m into the application site from the north east corner to a pylon before splitting into two sets of overhead lines. One set of overhead lines travels south along the boundary of the application site, the other set of overhead lines continues in a south east direction passing south of Booth's Wood and out of the application site.

ACCESS

- 2.2.9. The main access to the application site will be gained via Skyline Drive and Catalina Approach through the existing Omega Business Park, with direct access from the M62 Junction 8. The Proposed Development can also be accessed from the south via Burtonwood Road, Whittle Avenue, Lingley Green Avenue, Omega Boulevard and Catalina Approach from the M62 Junction 8, as shown on **Figure 2.2**.
- 2.2.10. The Omega Business Park can be directly accessed from Omega boulevard via bus route 13, running every half an hour operated by Warrington's Own Buses. This bus route provides a loop between Omega Business Park and Warrington town centre.
- 2.2.11. There are no National Trails or Sustrans Routes within or immediately adjacent to the application site.
- 2.2.12. Public right of way (PRoW) 102 crosses the application site at the north western extent and runs north to south via a footbridge over the M62, as shown in **Figure 2.1**.
- 2.2.13. Sankey for Penketh is the closest railway station, located approximately 1.9km south-east of the application site.

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 2.3.1. Key environmental features are presented in **Figure 2.1** and summarised below, with further detail available in technical chapters 6 to 16.

AIR QUALITY

- 2.3.2. The application site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); however, the M62 immediately north-east of the application site extending east is a designated AQMA for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

- 2.3.3. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIAs) within the application site; however, there are seven NIAs within 2 km of the application site, including:
- One on Clock Face Road, 1.2 km north west;
 - One on Union Bank Lane, 1.7 km west;
 - Three on Warrington Road, 1 km south; and
 - Two on Liverpool Road, 990 m and 1.8 km south east.
- 2.3.4. There are sensitive receptors in close proximity to the application site that may be exposed to noise and vibration from the Proposed Development, including:
- Stepping Stones Day Nursery, immediately east;
 - Dwellings on Bembridge Close, approximately 350 m south; and
 - Isolated dwellings approximately 500 m to the west, including Old Bold Hall Farm and Old Hall Farm.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

- 2.3.5. There are no designated heritage assets within the application site; however there are five Scheduled monuments and 10 Grade II Listed buildings within 2 km of the application site. Three non-designated heritage assets have been identified within the 200 m of the application site comprising the possible location of a watermill, the site of medieval / post-medieval park, and medieval field boundaries and ridge and furrow earthworks. Of these, the site of medieval / post-medieval park is within the application site.

BIODIVERSITY

- 2.3.6. The closest statutory ecological designations that surround the application site include:
- Colliers Moss Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR) located 2.7 km north;
 - Paddington Meadows LNR located 7.5 km south east;
 - Mersey Estuary Ramsar, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 7.4 km south-west; and
 - Woolston Eyes Site of SSSI located 8.1 km south east.
- 2.3.7. The closest non-statutory ecological designation is Booth's Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is adjacent to the western boundary of the application site.
- 2.3.8. The main habitats and species identified within the application site and the surrounding area are as follows:
- Broad-leaved woodland throughout, all of which are habitats of principle importance;
 - Broad-leaved plantation woodland along the eastern boundary of the application site;
 - Species poor hedgerow scattered throughout and along the eastern boundary; and
 - Improved grassland at the south-eastern extent of the application site.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

- 2.3.9. The application site is located wholly within National Character Area (NCA) 60: 'Mersey Valley', which is characterised as a wide, low-lying, river valley landscape focussed on the River Mersey, its estuary, associated tributaries and waterways.
- 2.3.10. The St. Helens Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (Ref. 2.1) shows that the application site is located within landscape character type number 5 'Wooded Former Estate' (WFE), specifically landscape area WFE 4 Bold Hall. The over-arching characteristics of the WFE 4 Bold Hall area are described as flat expansive floodplain landscape at an average elevation of 25 m AOD with an open rural landscape which is interrupted by a number of mature woodland plantations and shelterbelts which break up the large scale field patterns.

WATER

- 2.3.11. An unnamed watercourse, which is a designated Main River¹ with associated areas of flood zone 2, runs from the north-west along the western boundary of the Proposed Development to Booth's Wood, and through the southern end of the application site, continuing south for 330 m before merging with the Whittle Brook (designated Main River). There are a further four Main Rivers within 2 km of the application site which are situated 545 m east, 1 km north, 1.6 km south and 1.7 km east of the application site respectively at their closest points.
- 2.3.12. The application site is situated wholly within an area designated as a principle bedrock aquifer and secondary (undifferentiated) superficial drift aquifer. In addition, the application site is located within Source Protection Zone 3 (total catchment). A groundwater drinking water safeguard zone is located approximately 4.6 km north east of the application site.

LAND AND SOILS

- 2.3.13. The application site is situated on agricultural land that has been classified as Grade 2, which is classed as very good quality agricultural land.

2.4 KEY SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

- 2.4.1. There are a number of sensitive receptors that have been identified as relevant to the Proposed Development and these have been taken into consideration within the assessment presented in technical chapters 6 to 16. The key sensitive receptors are summarised in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1 - Key sensitive receptors

Receptor	Change likely to experience	Design stage
Unnamed Main River	Realignment	Construction
Grade 2 Agricultural Land	Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land	Construction
Deciduous woodland priority habitat	Loss of priority habitat	Construction
Lingley Mere Business Park	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust, and noise and vibration levels	Construction
Stepping Stones Day Nursery	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust, and noise and vibration levels	Construction

¹ According to the 'Designation of 'main rivers': guidance to the Environment Agency, a watercourse is designated as a Main River if: a significant number of people and / or properties are liable to flood; where there are vulnerable groups and areas where flooding can occur with limited time for warnings; where it can contribute to extensive flooding across a catchment or where it is required to reduce flood risk elsewhere

Receptor	Change likely to experience	Design stage
Busy Noughts to Fives Nursery	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and noise levels	Construction
North West Fire Control	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and vibration levels	Construction
Barrow Hall College	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and vibration levels	Construction
Great Sankey High School	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and vibration levels	Construction
Lingley Green residential area	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and vibration levels	Construction
Residential area approximately 500 m to the west, including Old Bold Hall Farm and Old Hall Farm.	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and vibration levels	Construction
Bold Heath residential area	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and vibration levels	Construction
Westbrook residential area	Disturbance from increased air pollution i.e. fugitive dust and vibration levels	Construction
Booth's Wood	Damage to and / or loss of species and habitat	Construction

2.5 REFERENCES

- Ref. 2.1: St. Helens Borough Landscape Character Assessment, prepared for St. Helens Council by Land Use Consultants, January 2006



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