

MILLER

DEVELOPMENTS



38.8A Summary Proof of evidence of DAVID THOMAS MILLOY (for the Applicants)

on Background to Omega Business Park and Site Context

Call-in by the Secretary of State of an application made by Omega St Helens Limited / T J Morris Limited

Land To The West of Omega South & South Of The M62, Bold, St Helens

LPA REF : P/2020/0061/HYBR

PINS REF : APP/H4315/V/20/3265899

March 2021

CONTENTS

		Page
1.0	Experience and Scope of Evidence	3
2.0	Background	3 – 5
3.0	Land Ownership	5
4.0	Access	5
5.0	Existing 132kV Power Lines	5 – 6
6.0	Utilities	6
7.0	Offsite Highway Improvements	6 – 7
8.0	Pre-Commencement Conditions & Construction	7
9.0	Other Statutory Consents	7

1.0 Experience and Scope of Evidence

Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 My name is David Thomas Milloy. I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree in Land Economics from the University of the West of Scotland. I was a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors for 32 years.
- 1.2 I am the Managing Director of M2 Group Limited (trading as Miller Developments) a land and property development company. Omega St Helens Limited, is a wholly owned subsidiary of M2 Group Limited.
- I have 30 years' experience in all aspects of property development.
- 1.3 I am currently responsible for Omega Business Park ('Omega') and its ongoing development and have had an involvement with the project since its start.

Scope of Evidence

- 1.4 My evidence is concerned with the background, history and evolution of Omega, as well as providing details of all preparatory works we have completed in advance to ensure the proposed development on Omega West can be commenced immediately, should planning permission be granted.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The land on which Omega has been developed was formerly an MOD airfield. The base extended to 577 acres and closed in 1991. Ownership transferred to The Commission for New Towns (CNT) now known as Homes England. The CNT funded the construction of a grade-separated junction on the M62 (Junction 8) to enable Omega to have **direct** access to the motorway network.
- 2.2 Omega Warrington Ltd (OWL) is Homes England's development partner for Omega under a long-term Development Agreement. OWL is a wholly owned subsidiary of M2 Group Ltd.
- 2.3 Omega was originally envisaged as a strategic office park (Use Class B1), with ancillary storage & distribution uses (Use Class B8) on the north side of the M62. Omega was re-masterplanned to provide a mixture of B2 manufacturing / B8 logistics / residential uses and a reduced amount of B1(a) office use when it became clear there was not strong demand for offices in this location.

- 2.4 OWL has completed in excess of £60m of infrastructure at Omega, including a 35 acre public park, and has sold four serviced residential sites to national housebuilders (which total around 775 plots).
- 2.5 During 2019, a revised masterplan for the remaining development land at Omega South was produced. The interface between B2/B8 uses and the existing housing to the east of Burtonwood Road required careful analysis as there was a need to design out future noise nuisance issues. The new masterplan:-
- i) removed the remaining B1(a) office component;
 - ii) restricted the remaining commercial development to three B2/B8 units, all with single-sided docking bays and service yards orientated towards the M62 to negate noise nuisance; and
 - iii) increased the number of residential units.
- 2.6 Construction activity on Omega did not commence until 2012, when the first phase of infrastructure was built. Since then some 5.2m sqft of B2/B8 space has been developed by OWL which equates to an average of 520,000 sqft per annum. This clearly highlights the attractiveness of Omega to occupiers and supports the view that Omega is the pre-eminent development of this type in the North West.
- 2.7 None of the buildings completed by OWL are currently available (one unit completed in early 2021 and another currently under construction are under offer to a single occupier). Nor have there ever been any vacancies - the first occupier of each building remains in occupation to this date.
- 2.8 When discussions with T J Morris (TJM) started in 2019, their initial interest was for the site on Omega South that is immediately south of Skyline Drive, but OWL and TJM could not get a satisfactory layout to work. The reasons were technical:
- a) we could not satisfy the acoustic condition in the existing outline planning permission and thus there was an insurmountable noise issue;
 - b) the massing of the TJM unit would not have been acceptable to the Local Planning Authority;
 - c) the layout was compromised.
- 2.9 OWL then worked with TJM to produce a satisfactory layout on Omega West.
- 2.10 There is much more to delivering B2/B8 accommodation than just obtaining a planning permission. A number of issues had to be resolved before development could commence

and these have been dealt with in parallel with the planning application. A number are common issues that have to be resolved for any development site. Omega West has cleared them all which confirms the site is deliverable and genuinely 'oven ready'.

3.0 Land Ownership

- 3.1 M2 Group Limited has secured contractual control of the land required to deliver Omega West in its entirety.

4.0 Access

- 4.1 There will be a single point of vehicular access to Omega West via Catalina Approach, which connects to Skyline Drive by way of a roundabout junction. Skyline Drive then leads directly to Junction 8 of the M62.

- 4.2 Catalina Approach currently serves four units and was designed with Omega West in mind. In common with Skyline Drive, Catalina Approach incorporates a 10 metre wide carriageway. A 3.5m wide shared path for pedestrians and cyclists runs the entire length of the road.

- 4.3 Catalina Approach is now complete, with the exception of a small section at its western end. Detailed planning permission for this section has been secured.

- 4.4 WBC formally adopted Catalina Approach in March 2021.

5.0 Existing 132kV Power Lines

- 5.1 The Omega West site is currently bisected by 132 kV overhead transmission lines operated by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN).

- 5.2 These lines would prevent the construction of the TJM unit on the land immediately west of the HUT Group building even if the TJM unit was pushed as far west as possible.

- 5.3 SPEN indicated that the existing overhead lines could be diverted around the periphery of the site but the process would take several years due to the lead-in time for cabling and the scheduling of the requisite outages. This would be prohibitive to the TJM programme and the scheme could not proceed.

5.4 Instead OWL entered into a contract with SPEN for the Temporary diversion of part of the south western line and the Permanent diversion of all the overhead cables. The Temporary diversion works were undertaken and completed in 2020.

6.0 Utilities

6.1 All utilities – power, gas, water, telecoms and foul drainage - are present within Catalina Approach and terminate adjacent to the eastern boundary of Omega West.

6.2 All utilities within Catalina Approach have been designed and sized with the proposed development in mind.

6.3 No offsite utility reinforcement is required to provide sufficient capacity to service the proposed development.

6.4 As the demand for bigger buildings and greater automation grows, so does the demand for power. OWL has secured the power capacity required for both the TJM unit and the floorspace proposed in outline for the balance of the Application Site. OWL have funded 2 primary sub stations on Omega to date and a third will be provided at Omega West.

7.0 Offsite Highway Improvements

7.1 To mitigate the impact of the proposed development, conditions are proposed requiring off-site highway improvements, which reflect the conditions proposed by Highways England and WBC in their consultation responses. The works relate to road widening between M62 J8 and Skyline Drive / Fairchild Road and to the westbound M62 exit slip.

Progress to date

7.2 The Skyline Drive widening works commenced in October 2020 and were completed in January 2021

7.3 The works to the westbound M62 exit slip on Junction 8 commenced on 8th March 2021.

8.0 Pre-Commencement Conditions & Construction

8.1 There are **no** pre-commencement conditions proposed for the full element of the proposed development.

8.2 Care was taken during the application process to provide sufficient requisite information in advance (so as to obviate the need for numerous pre-commencement requirements). This

was driven by the TJM programme and to ensure that the time between planning permission being granted and work commencing on site was as short as possible.

- 8.3 Furthermore, the Applicants have fully tendered the construction contracts for Unit 1 and associated infrastructure works and selected preferred contractors who can mobilise to site and commence construction works within 2-3 weeks.

9.0 Other Statutory Consents

- 9.1 In addition to a detailed planning consent, a number of other statutory consents are also required in order for the construction of Unit 1 and associated infrastructure works to proceed. These have all been obtained by the Applicants.