

Case Study: Partnership Working Maximises Health, Safety and Sustainability for Saint Gobain Pipelines

More than two years after the closure of Saint-Gobain Pipelines' (SGP) Staveley Works in Derbyshire, a complex dismantling process was undertaken to remove foundry buildings that had dominated the local skyline for up to 300 years.

Construction Design Management (CDM) co-ordinator and project management consultancy RVA Group was called in to supervise the substantial project which involved asbestos removal, demolition and the clearance of 30 multifaceted buildings on the site of a former coalmine.



The need for the specialist health and safety expertise and attention to detail, on which RVA has built its excellent reputation, has never been more acute than at Staveley Works where the team – working with the demolition contractor – faced a myriad of hurdles on the centuries-old industrial site, aided only in some cases by 18th century drawings of limited standard.

With a long and interesting industrial history the site had seen many changes of use, facilities adapted and substantial interior structures built within buildings. Unfortunately there were many gaps in the documentation and, even where records were present, the level of information given fell far short of what RVA would routinely expect by today's standards.

In the absence of a full picture of what lay within and beneath the 57.7 hectare site, RVA therefore conducted its own surveys, some of which revealed dangerous voids. In certain areas however access prior to starting the work was impossible, seriously heightening the element of the unknown.

In such a situation, it was imperative that RVA was extremely vigilant at all times, working very closely with the 24-man demolition team over the 38-week project, to progressively and continuously assess, document and overcome every aspect of risk. The increased complexity and 'indefinite' aspect of the operation could have dramatically increased the

potential risk to workmen if it had not been competently managed under a rigorously imposed health and safety regime.

As part of the dismantling operation, RVA also devised a 'production line' salvage system to reclaim timber, plastic and scrap metal from the former cast iron foundry, fulfilling and underlining SGP's ongoing commitment to sustainability and the environment.

The unique method, more akin to an engineering solution than usual demolition practice, saw suitable material graded, segregated and processed for recycling in the UK.

The Ipswich-based team of consulting engineers also worked in partnership with the local authorities to ensure minimum disruption to the site's commercial and residential neighbours.

RVA's highly valuable services had already been put to use by Saint-Gobain UK on other major dismantling projects, including works at an Aberdeenshire papermill earlier this year. The company has also worked with the contractor on 12 other projects, including decommissioning of the Ciba Speciality Chemicals plant in Manchester.

SGP's finance director Nick Cammack said that, having recognised that the company did not possess the necessary skill set to oversee a project of such size, particularly with all the CDM regulations that needed to be covered, his management team had looked for a partner that reflected its number one priority of ensuring the health and safety of every party involved.



"RVA's performance on previous projects with Saint-Gobain in the UK was exemplary," he said. "We trust them and they filled us with confidence that the job would get done.

"It meant we could get on with the job we're best at – managing a ductile iron pipe and fittings company for the future – safe in the knowledge that our health and safety and environmental obligations were being fully met at Staveley."

For more information call +44 (0) 1473 256890,
email admin@rvagroup.org or visit www.rvagroup.org