

## Case Study: Potential of Former Chemical Works Unlocked

The site of a former chemical works was brought back to life by commercial property specialist St Paul's Developments plc, creating future employment opportunities for West Yorkshire.



Despite the recession, the South Yorkshire-based developer forged ahead with plans to transform the chemical production facility at Common Lane, Knottingley, into a mixed-use site incorporating offices and light industrial units as well as housing and associated amenities.

Commenting on the project managing director (technical) David Elliott said: "Whilst other property developers appear to be hibernating, St Paul's is continuing with its site acquisitions and development activities, ensuring ongoing investment in regeneration sites in Yorkshire and beyond, despite the economic downturn.

"Unlocking a site of this kind can ultimately achieve significant benefits for the community. Our five year re-development of Common Lane will create a range of job opportunities to offset losses incurred in recent times."



Prior to its closure the Knottingley plant provided jobs in the production of final and intermediate products for the chemical market. Its list of previous owners includes Midland Yorkshire Tar, Croda, Shell, Inspec and Degussa.

Decommissioning the 25-acre plant was a complex process, not least because of its top tier COMAH status. Many of the chemicals it produced – to aid the manufacturing of antioxidants, sun screen agents, and agrochemicals for example – were of a hazardous nature. The decontamination process required to bring the plant to a 'known state' prior to demolition had to be strictly regulated to prevent operative and third party exposure.



For that reason, St Paul's brought in leading project management and CDM co-ordinator RVA Group, to oversee the removal of asbestos and residual waste, demolition, dismantling and complete clearance of the site.

RVA delivered a bespoke and closely controlled engineering strategy for the decommissioning, decontamination and isolation of process plant, tankfarms, storage facilities, laboratories and offices – many of late 1940s origin.

In addition to bringing down the various low level structures, a 50m chimney stack close to the Aire and Calder Navigation Canal, was demolished using one of the tallest long reach excavators in the UK. The Hitachi excavator had a 60m telescopic boom and 120 tonne base.

David Elliott added: "We hadn't worked with RVA before but we were very impressed by the company's professional and meticulous approach."

For more information call +44 (0) 1473 256890,  
email [admin@rvagroup.org](mailto:admin@rvagroup.org) or visit [www.rvagroup.org](http://www.rvagroup.org)