

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
PO Box 26
Archway Road
Huyton
L36 9FB

FAO Kevin Foster

Our ref: DPA/JWIL/JFAR/U0008399

Your ref:

30 August 2023

Dear Kevin,

**Section 62A Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order (2015)
Full Planning Application Submission - Land at the Former Cronton Colliery, Symmetry Park, Merseyside**

Gerald Eve LLP ("Gerald Eve") is instructed to submit a planning application on behalf of its client, Tritax Symmetry Merseyside 1 Ltd ("the Applicant" or "TSL") for works to three mine shaft compounds and gas vent stacks on the site of the former Cronton Colliery, south of the of M62 Motorway, Cronton, L35 1QR, known as Symmetry Park, Merseyside ("the Site").

The description of the proposed development is:

"Full planning application for works to three mine shaft compounds and gas vent stacks on the site of the former Cronton Colliery comprising, the removal of existing fencing, concrete hardstanding and dismantling of the gas vent stacks to facilitate a reduction in ground levels, alongside the reassembly of the vent stacks, installation of replacement boundary treatments, resurfacing and new vehicular access arrangements."

A Site Location Plan denoting the boundary of the application Site is provided at **Appendix A**.

This application has been submitted electronically via the Planning Portal (Portal reference: PP-12382404). The following documents have been submitted in support of this application:

- Application Form
- Access Drawing prepared by SLR (ref: VN232557 TR104 Rev B)
- Drawings Pack prepared by UMC:
 - Site Location Plan (ref: 18128_P2001[C])
 - Site Plan (ref: 18128_P2002[A])
 - Fencing and Enclosure Details (ref: 18128_P2003[A])
 - External Finishes (ref: 18128_P2004[A])
 - Existing and Proposed Sections (ref: 18128_P2005[A])

- Engineering Drawings prepared by Tier:
 - Drainage Layout (ref: L005-TIE-ZZ-XX-DR-C-6044)
 - Coal Mine Shaft Sections - Sheet 1_T1 (ref: L005-TIE-ZZ-XX-DR-C-6041)
 - Coal Mine Shaft Sections - Sheet 2_T1 (ref: L005-TIE-ZZ-XX-DR-C-6042)
 - Coal Mine Shaft Sections - Sheet 3_T1 (ref: L005-TIE-ZZ-XX-DR-C-6043)
- ATEX Risk Assessment prepared by Tier (ref: TE1163-TE-00-TN-GE-003-V01)
- Coal Mine Cap Technical Note prepared by Tier (ref: TE1163-TE-00-XX-TN-GE-002-V02)
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment prepared by Tier (ref: TE1163-TE-00-XX-RP-GE-003-V01)

A payment has been made via BACS to the Planning Portal for the total amount of £468 (excluding service charge) which is the requisite planning fee in this instance.

Application Background & Planning History

A Hybrid Permission, submitted by Gerald Eve on behalf of the Applicant, was approved by the Council on 4th March 2022 for the redevelopment of the former Cronton Colliery comprising the following description of development:

“Hybrid planning application comprising: full application for the development of 161,900sqft (15,041sqm) (GIA) of storage and distribution floorspace (Use Class B8), including ancillary offices (Use Class B1), security gatehouse, site access road, engineering earthworks to form a part country park, public car park to serve country park, and associated works; and outline application with details of point of access (Details of part-access, landscaping, appearance, scale and layout are reserved) the development of up to 838,100sqft (77,862sqm) (GIA) of storage and distribution floorspace (Use Class B8), with ancillary offices and light industrial (Use Class B1); engineering earthworks to form country park and drainage attenuation ponds; pedestrian/cycle/equestrian route connecting Page 5 existing M62 footbridge with proposed country park; and associated works”.

The approved development, known as Symmetry Park Merseyside, covers an area of approximately 50.8 hectares (ha) and is split into two distinct phases of development (i.e. the full element and the outline element). The approved Illustrative Masterplan for the Hybrid Permission is attached at **Appendix B** for reference.

Unit 01 in the detailed area has almost reached completion, whilst reserved matters approval for two units was granted within the outline area on 30 June 2023 (ref: 22/00162/REM). A second reserved matters has just been submitted in the outline area in July 2023 (ref: 23/01949/REM) which, if approved, will supersede the initial reserved matters approval.

The Masterplan shows that this application Site is located outside of, but immediately adjacent to, the redline boundary of the Hybrid Permission. It sits on the border of both the outline and the full area, immediately west of the Symmetry Park Merseyside primary internal estate road and to the south-west of the Unit 01 entrance.

For completeness, the proposed new access route to the mine shafts is located within land subject to the detailed

element of the Hybrid Permission.

Site Description

The application Site comprises a rectangular area of land and adjoining future access track, measuring circa 0.135ha. For completeness the red line boundary includes the Symmetry Park Merseyside primary estate road and junction off Cronton Road in order to show how the Site will be accessed from adopted public highway, but no works are proposed to either of these elements.

The Site is located within the boundary of the former Cronton Colliery, which lies immediately south of the M62 motorway and to the east of Junction 6 known as Tarbock Island. It is formed of an area of hardstanding containing the compounds of three historical coal mine shafts:

- Shaft 1 (the southern shaft) was 4.57m in diameter and was 220.4m deep. It was backfilled in 1969 then grouted and capped in 1984/5 by the National Coal Board (NCB).
- Shaft 2 (central shaft) was 6.40m in diameter and 519.1m deep. Backfilled, grouted and capped in 1984/5 by the NCB.
- Shaft 3 (northern shaft) was 6.40m diameter and 485.3m deep. Backfilled, grouted and capped in 1984/5 by the NCB.

The mine shafts were deep (500m) shafts that were used during the life of the colliery to extract the coal from the sub surface. Following the closure of the colliery in 1984 the mine shafts were decommissioned and the Coal Authority records show that the shafts were backfilled with spoil and capped with reinforced concrete plugs. Ventilation pipes were then placed on top of the caps to vent any gases that accumulated in the backfilled shafts and these are monitored every two months by the Coal Authority.

The land surrounding the mine shafts is covered in a surficial layer of concrete hardstanding and the site is bordered by a palisade security fence.

In terms of the Site's surroundings, in the immediate context, the Site is surrounded by a mix of existing land uses. To the east, Unit 01 within the detailed area of the Hybrid Permission, is nearing completion and has been pre-let to Yodel. Beyond this industrial unit, are several private residential dwellings situated on a private access road which joins Fox's Bank Lane to the east, including a Grade II listed building known as Old Halsnead.

Proposed Development

The proposed development seeks to reduce the ground levels of the land surrounding the mine shafts and associated compounds in order to aid with the development of the wider Symmetry Park. It seeks to improve the appearance of the Site (and subsequently the surrounding site) by introducing new and improved surfacing and boundary treatments. The reduced levels around Shaft 1 will also help to accommodate a retaining wall against the primary internal estate road.

The proposed works will include the removal of the existing palisade fencing around the mine shafts, removal of the surficial layer of concrete hardstanding and dismantling of the vent stacks (flues) which are approximately 5.5m in height. The ground levels will then be reduced by up to 3m and the flues will be reassembled at a reduced height as follows:

- Flue No.01 - Existing +41.400m - Proposed +39.200m equating to a reduction of 2.200m in height
- Flue No.02 - Existing +41.800m - Proposed +39.600m equating to a reduction of 2.200m in height
- Flue No.03 - Existing +42.000m - Proposed +39.900m equating to a reduction of 2.100m in height

The lowering of the flues will not only improve the appearance of the Site, but will also improve visibility for drivers as they approach the bend. All works will not affect the integrity of the mine shafts or caps.

New 2.4m high paladin security fencing in green will be installed around the perimeter of the Site. A 2.4m high security fence and personnel gate will also be installed at the entrance of the Site, both also in the colour green. The Site will be resurfaced with 300mm thick grade concrete slab in grey.

The Coal Authority requires access to the mineshaft area to carry out regular monitoring. A new vehicular access point will therefore be secured to enable vehicles to attend the site off the primary estate road. The proposed access track has sufficient room for turning vehicles and sufficient visibility splays, as shown in the proposed Access Layout Drawing provided by Vectos. The access track will be finished in 450mm asphalt.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) indicates that decisions to be made under the planning Acts must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the relevant Development Plan Documents comprise:

- Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2016);
- Saved Policies of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (June 2006)

Core Strategy (2016)

The Core Strategy, adopted in 2016, sets out the vision, objectives and policies which will guide development within Knowsley up to the year 2028. The key development policies relevant to this Site and the proposed development are:

Policy SD1: Sustainable Development confirms that the Council will take a positive approach in determining planning applications, reflecting on the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy CS4: Economy and Employment amongst other things seeks to enhance the quality and efficiency of the land use within existing employment areas.

Policy SUE1: Sustainable Urban Extensions and Safeguard Land identifies the Site as falling within the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) – South of Whiston and Land South of M62. Complementary Policy SUE2 sets out a list of development principles that SUE's should accord with, including inter alia, delivering sustainable development of a high-quality design.

Policy SUE2c: Sustainable Urban Extension – South of Whiston and Land South of M62 contains site-specific requirements for the SUE at land south of the M62 motorway. Most of which are not considered to be relevant to this particular application, but one key matter that must be addressed is ensuring safe and convenient highways access to the Site.

Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Developments expects new development to, inter alia, respond to the character of the immediate surroundings, and complement and enhance the existing landscape, topography, green infrastructure and locally important and historically interesting features.

Policy CS24 Managing Flood Risk outlines how development will be expected to manage flood risk and drainage of new development should be designed to reduce surface water run-off rates.

Saved Policies from the UDP

The UDP was adopted in 2006 and all but four of the 82 individual UDP policies were “saved” by the Secretary of State on 12 June 2009. The key saved policies are:

Policy ENV2: Noise and Vibration confirms that planning permission will not be granted for development that would result in an unacceptable increase in noise or vibration, or indeed where the proposed use itself would be subject to unacceptable levels from an existing source. Effective noise insulation or other mitigation may be required and secured by condition.

Policy ENV5: Contaminated Land confirms that planning permission will not be granted on sites with existing contamination where development could result in unacceptable risk to occupiers or users, ecological systems, the water environments or surrounding land uses.

Planning Justification

This section sets out the planning justification for the proposed alterations to the mine shaft and vent stack compound.

Principle of development

The proposed works are considered to improve the appearance of the site as currently stands, through improvements to the surfacing and installation of new boundary treatments which in turn will aid the development of the wider Symmetry Park, as encouraged by Policy CS4. The lowering of the flues will also improve visibility for drivers as they approach the bend on the primary estate road.

The submitted Technical Note prepared by Tier Environmental Ltd confirms that the historical mineshafts and caps will not be impacted by the works and will remain intact. Most importantly, the works are supported by and have been agreed with the Coal Authority, which is the body responsible for proposals of this nature and owner of the Site.

Ground Conditions

Given the Site's history, and its location within a Coal Mining High Risk Area, a Coal Mining Risk Assessment (CMRA) has been submitted. The CMRA was prepared by Tier and covers the entire Symmetry Park site. It was previously submitted to support the adjoining Reserved Matters application ref: 23/01949/REM.

In respect of this Site, the CMRA states that all three mine shafts have been capped and vent stacks have been installed. All three shafts are monitored on a two monthly basis for gas by, or on behalf of, the Coal Authority. The latest results show that gas emissions from the mine shafts have decreased during the last 5 No. years.

As such the CMRA concludes that the risk of these recorded shafts affecting the proposed development is likely to be low.

Access

A new access track is provided off the internal primary estate road to allow regular access to the shafts for monitoring purposes and provides sufficient turning space for vehicles to exit the Site via the primary estate road.

Summary

On behalf of Tritax Symmetry Merseyside 1 Ltd, this application seeks approval for works to three mine shaft compounds and gas vent stacks on the site of the former Cronton Colliery, known as Symmetry Park, Merseyside.

The proposed works are supported by the Coal Authority and will improve the appearance of the site as currently stands, through improvements to the surfacing and installation of new boundary treatments, as well as creating a new access point to allow regular monitoring of the mine shafts.

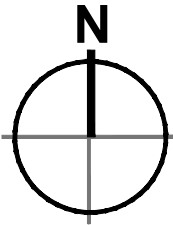
I trust that you find the above to be in order and sufficient to enable the validation of this planning application. Should you require any additional information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Jodie Farnill of this office.

Yours sincerely

Jenna Wilks
Associate

Appendix A – Site Location Plan

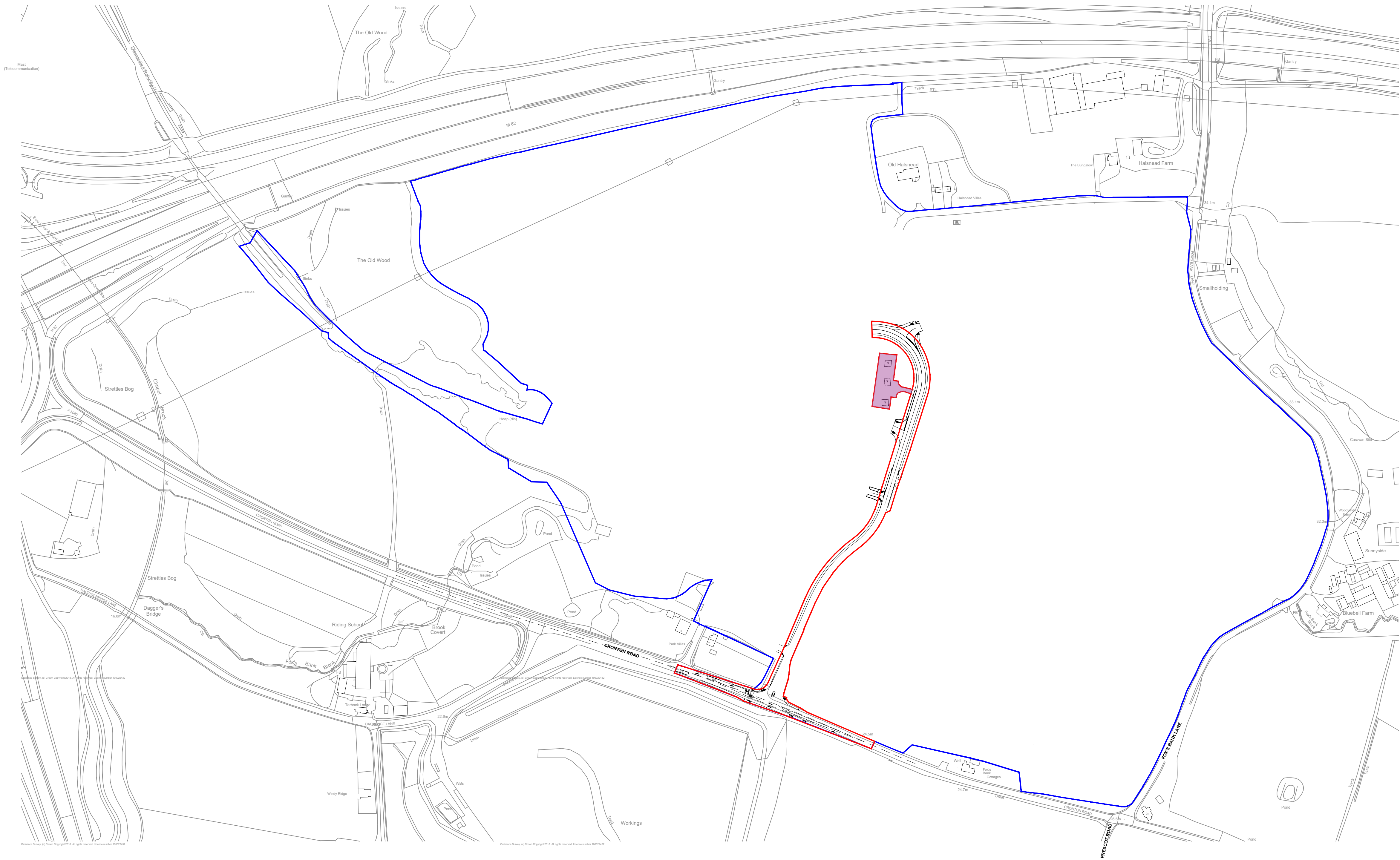
- Dimensions are in millimeters, unless stated otherwise.
- Scaling of this drawing is not recommended.
- It is the recipient's responsibility to print this document to the correct scale.
- All relevant drawings and specifications should be read in conjunction with this drawing.



Masterplan Boundary
125.88 Acres / 50.941 Ha

Application Boundary
2.921 Acres / 1.182 Ha

Access Track
0.334 Acres / 0.135 Ha



Mineshaft Location Plan

PLANNING
THIS DRAWING IS FOR PLANNING CONSIDERATION ONLY
AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE

rev	amendments	by	ckd	date
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Symmetry Park, Merseyside

Mineshaft Location Plan

TRITAX SYMMETRY
A TRITAX BIG BOX COMPANY

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