

Builders merchant branches out



Crawley was the first brownfield development for Buildbase.

As the UK's fastest growing builders merchant Buildbase has expanded from one four-acre site in Oxford to a national network of over 120 branches in the last decade. Despite being a relative newcomer Buildbase has been named as the UK's best national builders merchant in its industry awards in 2003 and 2005.

As well as growth by acquisition, Buildbase will open new branches – whether greenfield or brownfield developments – where there is sufficient demand for a new builders merchants depot.

Finding sites that are suitable for development as a builders merchant presents a special challenge. When gaining planning permission, standard planning categories do not apply to builders merchants because the sites are used for a diverse range of activities including storage, retail, manufacture, equipment hire and transport. 'Sui generis' planning permission is required for a builders merchant's business.

The density of buildings on site is relatively low at between 25-30 per cent. The nature of the

passing traffic although away from congested town centres. Another requirement is site security with fencing surrounding the site.

Glenny has worked with Buildbase to successfully locate and secure a number of sites for new branches or relocations. Brownfield developments have been completed at Crawley, Brentwood and Stratford E15. Sites have been found to relocate existing Buildbase branches at Stevenage and Haverhill. These relocations have freed up existing sites for development.



Sites must have sufficient space for deliveries and collections.

In order to achieve this, Buildbase has appointed Glenny to identify new sites within the M25 and East Anglia region. The brief specifies locations in or around towns with a population over 10,000 and sites of between 1 and 3 acres, depending upon the size of the town.

builders merchants business requires the majority of space to be undeveloped. Manufacturers' lorries deliver materials to Buildbase branches, goods in bulk are broken down for sale and most sites enjoy a high percentage of customer collections from the branch. Preferred sites will be located on a busy route with plenty of

“Builders merchants sites are unusual because only a quarter or a third of the plot will be developed. There must be plenty of room for deliveries and for local builders to drop in to collect timber and building materials with ease,” says Martin Lee, Buildbase director who is one of Glenny’s client contacts. “Glenny’s local knowledge and their specialist negotiating skills have helped Buildbase find the right sites, which are increasingly hard to find.”

Other important Glenny services for Buildbase include lease rental negotiations to agree favourable new terms or rates when leases are renewed.