GUIDE DISMANTLING · 7 MIN READ

Site clearance for brownfield investors

Site clearance for investors: due diligence, contamination risk, dismantling planning and handover ready for construction. A guide for brownfield projects.

Situation

Brownfield investors acquire former industrial sites with a view to new use — as commercial space, a logistics location, a residential area or mixed use. Economic success depends largely on the dismantling and remediation costs being calculated correctly and reflected in the purchase price.

In addition to the usual technical and legal checks, the due diligence carried out before the property is acquired must include a qualified assessment of legacy contamination and an estimate of the dismantling costs. Misjudgements at this stage lead to considerable financial risks.

The time required to reach development readiness determines the profitability of the investment. Every month of delay in permits, remediation or dismantling weighs on the return. Investors need a reliable partner that delivers on schedule.

Contamination risks and legacy contamination are the greatest sources of uncertainty. They can considerably reduce the value of a property or make a project uneconomic. An early and thorough investigation creates planning certainty.

Our approach

Technical due diligence: assessment of the scope of dismantling, the hazardous-substance situation and the ground conditions before the purchase is completed. A robust cost estimate as a basis for negotiating the purchase price.

Risk analysis and liability assessment: identification of all environmental-law risks, assessment of liability for legacy contamination and recommendations on contractual safeguards (indemnity undertakings, warranties, reserves).

Delivery on schedule: a binding programme with defined milestones and liquidated damages. Permit procedures and preparatory works run in parallel in order to shorten the overall duration.

Turnkey site clearance: a complete service from hazardous-substance remediation through dismantling to a development-ready site. One contract, one point of contact, one programme.

Sustainability documentation: recovery rates, the CO_2 footprint of the dismantling, evidence of land recycling for

ESG reporting and for sustainability certification of the new build.

Sequence

1. Due diligence (before completion of the purchase)

Site walk-through, hazardous-substance assessment, dismantling cost estimate, risk analysis. Result: a basis on which the investor can decide and a foundation for purchase price negotiations.

2. Planning and permits (months 1–4)

Detailed planning of the dismantling, permit applications, disposal concept, tendering. In parallel: supplementary investigations and coordination with the authorities.

3. Dismantling and remediation (months 4–12)

Hazardous-substance remediation, selective dismantling, soil remediation. Ongoing coordination with the investor on progress, costs and deadlines.

4. Handover and development readiness (completion)

Final sampling, official release for use, handover of the development-ready site with complete documentation. The basis for the building application and for the investor's marketing.

Frequently asked questions

When should dismantling due diligence be carried out?

Ideally before the purchase is completed — as part of the technical due diligence. The findings feed into the purchase price negotiation and the contractual allocation of risk. A subsequent investigation is more expensive and carries the risk of unpleasant surprises.

How can I safeguard against contaminated-land risks contractually?

The most important instruments are: an indemnity undertaking from the seller, environmental liability insurance, reserves in the purchase contract and an official release from contaminated-land liability. The specific arrangement depends on the individual case and requires legal advice.

How long does it take from takeover to a development-ready site?

For a medium-sized industrial site, 9 to 15 months should be allowed for. The duration depends on the level of contamination, the building volume and the permit procedures. Running planning and permitting in parallel makes it possible to optimise the overall period.

Is dismantling economically worthwhile?

In conurbations with high demand for land, the increase in value achieved through remediation and dismantling generally exceeds the costs by a considerable margin. Viability has to be examined on a case-by-case basis — a robust dismantling cost estimate is the basis for the investment decision.

Let us talk about your project

Reply within 24 hours on working days.

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