



INTERNATIONAL
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PLANTS

From factory ruins to an award-winning community that has risen from the ashes



The Bromborough factory once powered global candle production, and the company town around it set an early precedent for social infrastructure in industry. The site's iconic clock tower stood as a monument to a bygone era — until IPP made it a centerpiece of the site's revival.



Redevelopment without compromise

Affordable housing, restored green space and historic preservation. How IPP helps communities, companies and governments plan smarter transitions

In Bromborough, England, along the banks of the River Dibbin, stood the remnants of a once-iconic industrial facility. The factory had been there since 1853, built first for Price's Patent Candle Company and later converted for oleochemical production under Croda International. For more than a century and a half, it anchored a company town known as Bromborough Pool, where workers lived in cottages built by the factory's original owners — a vision of mid-Victorian industrial paternalism that predated the modern concept of live-work communities.

But by 2009, that vision was gone. The factory closed. The final 115 workers were laid off. And a 30-acre site, layered with legacy infrastructure, aging process units, and environmental complexity, sat idle in the heart of a community that had already weathered economic losses.

International Process Plants (IPP) saw something different. Where others saw an obsolete facility, IPP saw potential. Where others feared the risks, IPP understood the opportunity. And where most companies would have walked away, IPP got to work.

Today, that same site is a thriving mixed-use community, anchored by 285 new homes — 20% of them affordable — and a restored riverwalk that links the area to broader public parkland. It's a place where families walk where tank farms once stood. Where supported-living apartments now occupy a preserved 19th-century clock tower. And where more than 1,890 jobs have been created since the factory's closure. Bromborough didn't just survive industrial decline; it redefined what recovery looks like. The transformation is a master class in the circular economy, and IPP led every phase.

"This wasn't just about reselling equipment," said Ron Gale, President of IPP. "This was about writing a second chapter for an entire community. We approached it as a global redevelopment challenge, not just a local real estate issue. And because we were able to extract value from the assets, we could fund the cleanup, protect the historical fabric, and deliver something better than what was there before."

Unique business model supports bold projects

IPP acquired the site through its UK affiliate Dibbin Estates shortly after Croda's closure. The company's model is unique in the industrial space: It purchases entire plants and inventories of process equipment — including chemical, pharmaceutical, petrochemical, food, and specialty manufacturing systems — then resells or redeploys those assets globally. It operates 20 complete industrial sites and maintains an inventory of more than 15,000 pieces of process equipment across 15 countries. That scale gives IPP the flexibility to pursue bold projects that most firms wouldn't consider.

The Croda plant's complexity didn't scare the team. If anything, it reinforced IPP's confidence in its model.

“Some people forget just how complicated industrial decommissioning can be,” said Jan Gale, Executive Vice President. “You’re not just taking down a building. You’re navigating environmental law, public concern, historical protections, utility networks, logistics, resale, demolition — all with the expectation that something productive will follow. That’s what we do best. We solve for the full life cycle.”

IPP began with asset redeployment. Hundreds of items — from heat exchangers to distillation columns to control systems — were refurbished and sold to buyers around the world. This isn’t just good business; it’s good environmental policy. Equipment redeployment keeps large, energy-intensive components out of landfills, dramatically reduces embedded carbon, and avoids the emissions that come with manufacturing new equipment.



IPP’s redevelopment brought 1,890 jobs back to the area and transformed industrial land into a live-work-play community.

“It’s one of the most overlooked pieces of the circular economy,” Jan Gale said. “People love to talk about recycling plastic or building solar panels. But the carbon impact of large-scale industrial systems is enormous. When we find new homes for these systems, we extend their life cycle and conserve global resources. That’s real impact.”

Local firms complete environmental remediation, river restoration

With the proceeds from asset sales, IPP invested in remediation. Soil decontamination, asbestos removal, and river restoration were all carried out by respected local firms. A key feature of the environmental work was the renaturalization of the River Dibbin.

Decades of engineering had confined the river to an unnatural channel, which increased flood risk and eliminated habitat. IPP’s team rerouted the river to establish a tidal wetland that not only protects the

site from flooding but also supports biodiversity. A new walkway now follows the water's edge — the first time in nearly two centuries that the public has had access to the site's waterfront.

None of the remediation waste went to landfill — a milestone noted by the environmental team and cited in council records.

“This wasn't a cleanup for optics,” said Ross Gale, Vice President of IPP. “It was a real application of circular economy principles — reuse the equipment, renaturalize the land, preserve what has meaning, and make the rest viable again. You can't do that with just money or good intentions. You need experience. You need vision. You need to build the value chain forward.”



Where process tanks once stood, families now walk and cycle along a restored tidal wetland and public greenway.

And IPP did just that. Working with Ainsley Gomon Architects, IPP advanced a phased master plan rooted in the original “garden village” layout. That plan honored the site's historical layout while introducing 21st-century standards for housing, transportation, and public space. The redevelopment includes an equipped play area, cycling infrastructure, and access roads that connect the new neighborhood to the adjacent Wirral International Business Park, a growing regional hub for logistics and advanced manufacturing.

Importantly, the access roads were designed to separate commercial and residential traffic, improving safety and supporting long-term economic viability.

Historic clock tower converted to supported-living apartments

One of the project's most lauded accomplishments is the preservation and adaptive reuse of the site's historic clock tower — a listed structure and landmark in the region. Rather than demolish it or allow deterioration, IPP restored the building and converted it into supported-living apartments, integrating modern use into a historical frame.

The results have been widely praised. In 2016, the project was awarded the National Planning & Placemaking Award for Brownfield Land Regeneration, recognizing not just the design but the execution — a critical distinction in an industry where plans too often remain on paper. Local government officials have publicly lauded the project for preserving heritage, expanding housing access, and creating long-term employment. Environmental advocates cite the wetland corridor as a model for integrating natural infrastructure into post-industrial landscapes.

And the people of Bromborough have seen their town transform in real time. Families now stroll along a riverfront once off-limits. Schools and businesses benefit from renewed population growth. And new generations are learning the town's industrial history not as a relic, but as a foundation for progress.

"This should be the global template," Ross Gale said. "Industrial shutdowns are happening everywhere — in chemicals, in refining, in power. Companies can either walk away or they can do what we did here. They can reimagine the land. They can put capital and creativity to work. They can do the hard things and leave something better behind."

IPP's track record suggests Bromborough won't be their last such redevelopment.

With active projects across North America, Europe, and Asia — including recent plant redeployments in Germany, the U.S. Gulf Coast, and Southeast Asia — IPP continues to lead the market in full-scope industrial transition. In each case, the company applies the same principles: extract value, reinvest locally, build partnerships, and solve holistically.

The result is not just a better environmental outcome. It's a smarter financial one.

IPP helps plant owners reduce closure costs, transfer environmental liability, and eliminate long-term site risk — all while opening the door to profitable resale of equipment and land. For municipalities, the benefit is a partner who can handle complexity while delivering community-facing results. For buyers of used equipment, it means access to high-quality, real-world-tested systems at a fraction of the cost and lead time of new.

"This is what we mean when we say we deliver complete solutions," Jan Gale said. "We help businesses move forward. We help communities reimagine their future. And we help ensure that industry remains a force for progress — not decline."

With final homes under construction and Bromborough nearly complete, IPP is already in talks with regional stakeholders about how to apply the same model to other post-industrial sites.

The lessons are clear: Circular economy isn't just theory. It's achievable. It's replicable. And when done right, it delivers for everyone involved.

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