

**Archaeological Attendance and Recording
(Watching Brief) on a Workshop Extension
at MIRA Drive, Lindley,
HORIBA MIRA, Nuneaton
NGR: SP 3622 9535**

Nathan Flavell



Site Name: Workshop Extension, MIRA Drive, Lindley, HORIBA MIRA, Nuneaton

Grid Ref: SP 3622 9535

Author: Nathan Flavell

Client: HORIBA MIRA

Planning Authority: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Planning Ref: 23/00303/FUL

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Cover photo: *Machining in progress*

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OASIS Information

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	Project Name	An Archaeological Watching Brief on a Workshop Extension at MIRA Drive, Lindley, HORIBA MIRA, Nuneaton		
	Start/end dates	27/09/23-14/11/23		
	Previous/Future Work	Unknown		
	Project Type	Watching brief		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Field		
	Monument Type/Period	none		
	Significant Finds/Period	none		
	Reason for Investigation	Planning regulation NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Condition		
PROJECT LOCATION	Planning Ref.	23/00303/FUL		
	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	MIRA Drive, Lindley, HORIBA MIRA, Nuneaton CV10 0TU		
	Study Area	310 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SP 3622 9535		
PROJECT CREATORS	Height OD	88m		
	Organisation	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Brief Originator	LCC Planning		
	Project Design Originator	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Manager	Matt Beamish		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Nathan Flavell		
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		Physical	Digital	Paper
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An archaeological watching brief on a Workshop Extension at MIRA Drive, Lindley, HORIBA MIRA, Leicestershire.

Nathan Flavell

Summary

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at MIRA, Lindley Drive, HORIBA MIRA. The work was undertaken between 27th September – 11th November 2023 on behalf of HORIBA MIRA in advance of a workshop extension.

Archaeological observation was carried on excavation of foundation pad pits, foundation trenches and drainage trenches. No archaeological deposits were identified and no finds were made.

The report will be deposited under the Oasis number universi1- 522269 with the Archaeology Data Service. Due to the negative archaeological remains the archive has been deemed sterile and therefore not deposited either with Leicestershire Museums or the ADS.

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, (MHCLG 2021) this document forms the report for archaeological attendance and recording (watching brief) at MIRA Drive, Lindley, HORIBA MIRA, Nuneaton CV10 0TU

The work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of HORIBA MIRA.

Planning Permission has been granted for the extension of an existing workshop (Planning Ref: 23/00303/FUL), and associated services and the permission includes a condition for archaeological work. Due to the archaeological potential, the archaeological advisor to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council requested archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (watching brief) during any groundworks for the proposed development in order to record any archaeological remains that may be present and mitigate the impacts of the scheme.

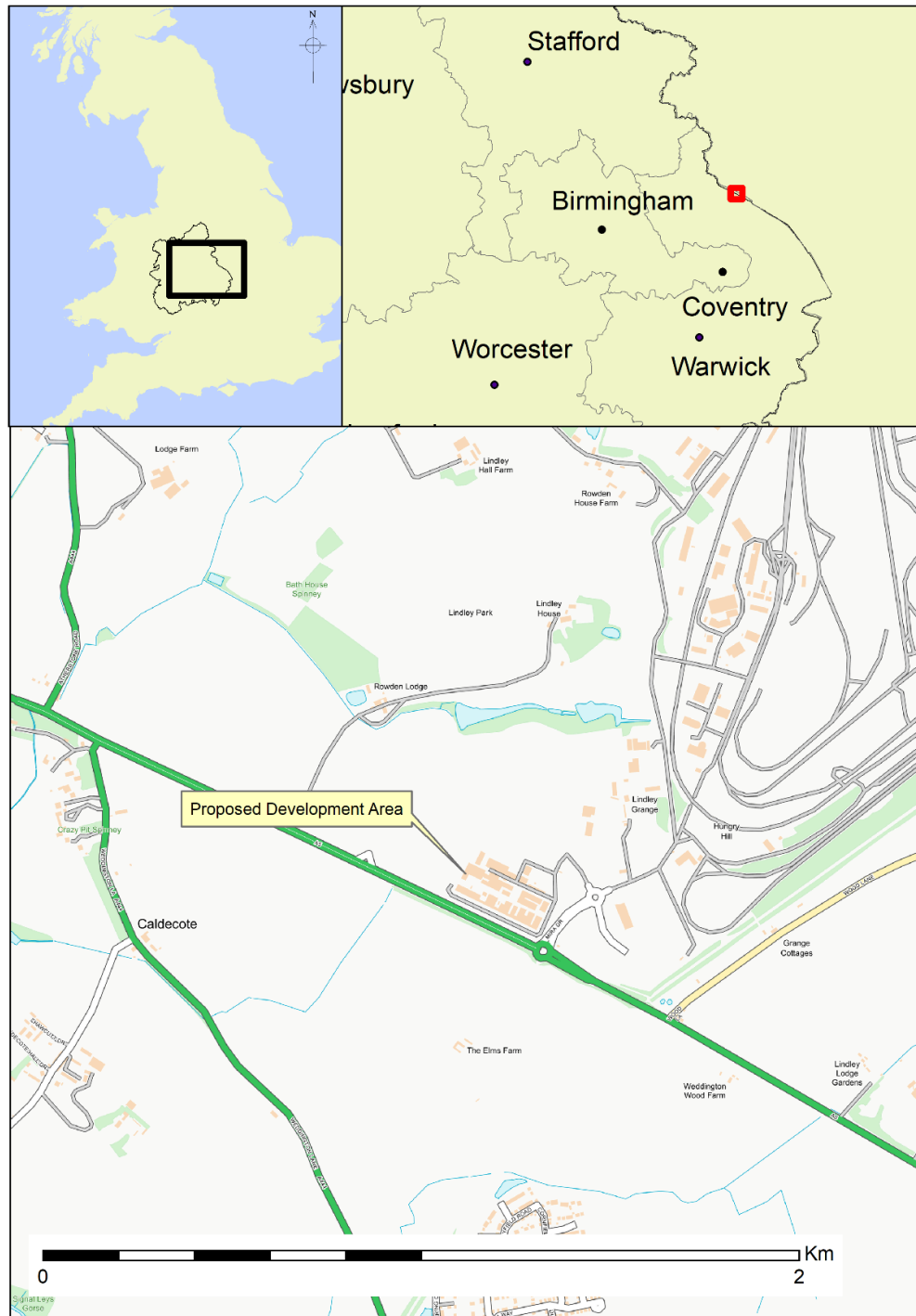
Location, Topography & Geology

The HORIBA MIRA site lies within the parish of Higham-on-the-Hill, in the District of Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, around 5 miles north-west of Hinckley and 5 miles south-east of Atherstone (Figure 1). It is demarcated by the A5 (Roman Watling Street) to the south; which is the border with Warwickshire. The dismantled Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway runs to the south-east of the site and to the north- west and north-east lie fields and local roads. The total area of the MIRA site is around 310 hectares.

The site is accessed from the A5 road running along the southern boundary of the whole site. The proposed development area lies on the western edge of an existing cluster of buildings which are located to the west of the main site entrance. It is located on a gentle slope and lies 88m above OD.

The British Geological Survey identifies the bedrock geology of the area as consisting of Mercia Mudstone Group with superficial deposits of Thruington Member (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>).

The Soilscape website indicates that the soils, will be Soilscape 8: Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage, <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilsapes/> last accessed 26/09/2023.



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Figure 1: Location of site within the UK and locally.

Historical and Archaeological Background

An Archaeological Risk Appraisal was undertaken by Headland Archaeology in March 2023. This concluded that the site has been agricultural land since at least the medieval period. Although it formed part of the wartime airfield it has not been subject to any intensive development or disturbance. Due to the background level of finds from across the area the potential for prehistoric archaeological remains was considered to be low to medium. The potential for Roman is higher at medium due to the proximity of the nearby Roman road and other nearby finds. Although there is evidence for medieval ridge and furrow within the locality the potential for medieval features and deposits is thought to be low.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland shows that the HORIBA MIRA site lies on the site of the old Lindley Airfield (HER Ref. **MLE15973**). The site also lies on the site of the deserted parish of Rowden (**MLE2795**) and adjacent to earthworks associated with the abandoned village of Lindley (**MLE2792**). There are also enclosures dating from the Iron Age adjacent to the site (**MLE9578**) and other prehistoric sites are located nearby (**MLE8245**, **MLE6080** and Warks HER No. **4420** & **4501**).

The proposed development area for the workshop extension lies close to the A5 Watling Street, a former Roman Road (**MLE1388**) and the Mancetter Roman Road has been projected to run to the north of the site (**MLE3019**). Roman pottery has been found within the former Lindley parish (**MLE8503**) and a large amount has been found further to the south (Warks HER No. **7439**). Roman coins have also been retrieved from two hoards to the south (Warks HER No. **5141**) of the site and near Harper's Hill, around 800m south-east of the site (Warks HER No. **1653**).

There have been a number of archaeological interventions carried out across the MIRA site. A trial evaluation (Thomas 2011) and following excavation (Flavell 2014) located evidence of Roman occupation to the south-west bounded by the A5.

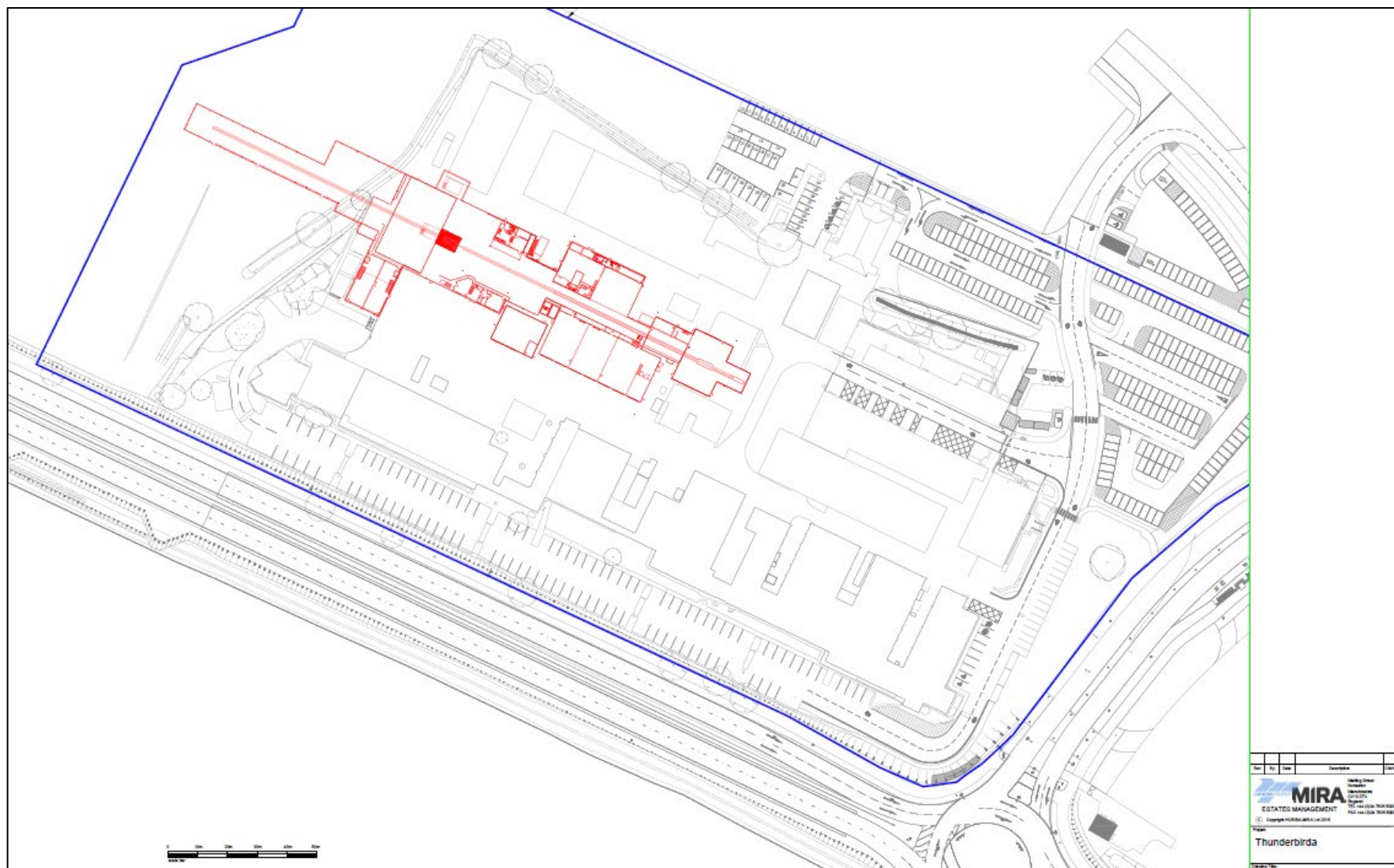


Figure 2: Detail from General Site Layout (rev A) (provided by client)

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were defined as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To characterise the extent, date range, character, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To excavate and record archaeological deposits uncovered during the work.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to aid in the dating and interpretation of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets and establish the relationship of any remains within the wider landscape.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Research Objectives

Initial research objectives were derived from the *East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework* (<https://researchframeworks.org/emherf/>)

The presence of Roman features in the immediate vicinity of the site suggested potential for further archaeological remains. The results had the potential to contribute towards research into the origins and development of prehistoric artefact chronology and settlement patterns, and Roman settlement, landscape and society. Environmental evidence could provide information on local environmental conditions as well as settlement activity, craft, industry and land use. Artefacts can assist in the development of a type series within the region and provide evidence for evidence for craft, industry and exchange across broad landscape areas indicating a potential for remains that could contribute to the following Research Objectives:

Roman

- 5H Investigate landscape contexts of rural settlements.
- 5I Support research and publication of landscape syntheses.

Medieval

- 6J Update and expand East Midlands Anglo-Saxon Pottery Project.

Post-Medieval

- 9H Provide strategic directions and information for agri-environment schemes
- 9J War in towns: research the urban infrastructure of war

Methodology

All work followed the procedures set out in the approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for the project (ULAS 2022).

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (updated 2020) and adhered to their *Code of Conduct* (updated 2021). The accession number X.A112.2023 was used to identify all records and artefacts.

Fieldwork was carried out by ULAS between 27th September and 14th November 2023 and was followed by post-excavation and reporting.

Table 1: Attendance and Reporting

Date	Site Staff	Times	Description
27/09/23	NAF	½ day	Sitework
09/10/23	NAF	1 day	Sitework
10/10/23	NAF	½ day	Sitework
16/10/23	NAF	1 day	Sitework
17/10/23	NAF	1 day	Sitework
18/10/23	NAF	1 day	Sitework
23/10/23	NAF	½ day	Sitework
13/11/23	NAF	1 day	Sitework
14/11/23	NAF	1 day	Sitework
30/11/23	NAF	1 day	Report
01/12/23	NAF	1 day	Report

The watching brief involved the observation of the engineering works for the scheme by an experienced professional archaeologist.

Excavation was carried out by the client's contractor, using machines provided by the contractor. This involved a soil strip for the compound, foundation pat pits, foundation trenches between the pits and drainage trenches (Figures 3 and 4). The machine did not track over any surfaces until the archaeologist had inspected and cleared the area.

Monitoring

Internal monitoring procedures were undertaken with the project manager, to ensure that project targets were met and professional standards maintained. No monitoring visits were undertaken by the Planning Archaeologist, but photos and descriptions of the results were shared with Planning archaeologist during the work.



Figure 3: Location of extension, compound and road developments

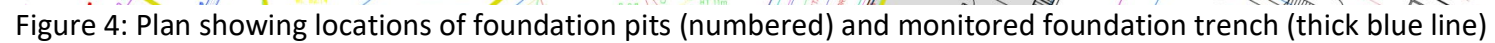




Figure 5: Area prior to stripping looking north-west

Results

Compound

A soil strip for the works compound was carried out on 27th September 2023 to the south-west of the development area (Figure 3). The topsoil was 0.2m deep on to a subsoil of sandy clay. This subsoil however, was not evident toward the south-west of the area with topsoil directly above natural pink clay geology. No archaeology was observed during this strip and no finds were recovered (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Compound strip looking north

Drain trenches

Between 9th-10th October 2023 a series of drain trenches were excavated across the development area. Natural substratum was uncovered at a depth of between 0.25-0.5m. No archaeological remains were observed and no finds recovered (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Excavated drain trench

Foundation pads

Between 16th-23rd October, 25 foundation pads were excavated across the development area. Pads 1-7 were located on the north-west side of a hedgerow, and Pads 8-25 to the south south-east (Figure 4).

Natural substratum was reached at a depth of between 0.42-0.7m deep. This was overlain by subsoil consisting of orange brown or mid grey silty clay of depths between 0.10 and 0.24m. The subsoil was overlain by a layer of mixed pink clay of varying between 0.04 and 0.3m in thickness. The clay layer was overlain by topsoil which was 0.27m thick on average (Figure 8).

No archaeological were observed and no finds recovered.

The pink clay overlying subsoil appeared to be redeposited natural, and suggests that some landscaping has taken place in the area.



Figure 8: Excavated pad pit 3 looking south-east



Figure 9: Excavated pad pit 13 looking south-west

Foundation trenches

Between 13th-14th November, the northern side of the foundation trenches were excavated (Figure 4, blue lines). A topsoil strip had taken place prior to the excavation of the trench to reduce the overall level. Subsoil was excavated down to formation level in the natural

substratum. Each foundation trench was observed and the same stratigraphy as the foundation pad pits recorded Figures 8-9). No archaeological features were revealed, and no finds made.



Figure 10: North-west foundation trench looking north



Figure 11: Eastern foundation trench looking north-east

Table 2: Foundation pit soil depths

Pit	Topsoil	Layer	Subsoil
1	0.24	0.1	0.12
2	0.3	0.15	0.12
3	0.35	0.25	0.10
4	0.2	0.3	0.12
5	0.2	0.15	0.1
6	0.3	0.15	0.18
7	0.3	0.15	0.1
8	0.3	0.04	0.22
9	0.27	0.05	0.24
10	0.2	0.08	0.18
11	0.14	0.1	0.18
12	0.2	0.12	0.14
13	0.32	0.11	0.15
14	0.3	0.07	0.24
15	0.23	0.15	0.2
16	0.3	0.12	0.24
17	0.33	0.08	0.23
18	0.28	0.08	0.13
19	0.3	0.1	0.12
20	0.3	0.12	flooded
21	flooded		flooded
22	0.31	0.1	0.14
23	0.3	0.1	0.12
24	0.32	0.12	0.17
25	0.3	0.14	0.2

The Finds

No finds were recovered.

Discussion and Conclusions

Archaeological observation of the workshop extension groundworks at HOBIRA MIRA demonstrated that there was a potential for archaeological deposits to be preserved, although no archaeology was identified. A layer of clay substrata observed in the various trenches and foundation pits across the site was evidence that the topsoil had been stripped at some point in the past and replaced above the redeposited clay layer. There is no evidence of when this making up of the ground dates to: it could possibly have been associated with the construction of the WW2 airfield RAF Lindley/Nuneaton, or with more recent construction.

Archive and Publication

In line with the Leicestershire County Council Museum Collections guidance (2024) and national standards outlined in the ClfA Toolkit for selecting archaeological archives, as the site was negative the on-site data recorded by hand and digitised in post excavation along with the photographic records are presented within the report (see appendix). This is instead of being deposited as digital files with the ADS. During the project set-up the accession number X.A112.2023 was allocated to the site but this is no longer required as an identifier for depositing material in the museum.

The online OASIS data entry has been completed detailing the results of the project and the report will be digitally accessible through The Archaeological Data Services (<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>) with universi1-522269 as the identifier.

A summary of this report will appear in due course in the Transactions the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank the client, Horiba Mira. The fieldwork and post-excavation were undertaken by Nathan Flavell and project managed by Matthew Beamish for ULAS. Archaeological advice was given by William Kelly, Leicestershire County Council, and Mark Hopkins managed the project for Horiba Mira.

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ULAS 2023 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief)*. Site: MIRA Drive, Lindley, HORIBA MIRA, Nuneaton CV10 0TU. ULAS 24-714

Appendix 1: Foundation pad pit photos



Figure 12: Pad pit 1 looking north-east



Figure 13: Pad pit 8 looking north-east



Figure 14: Pad pit 9 looking north-east



Figure 15: Pad pit 14 looking south-east



Figure 16: Pad pit 16 looking south-east



Figure 17: Pad pit 18 looking south-east



Figure 18: Pad pit 22 looking south-east



Figure 19: Pad pit 23 looking south-east



Figure 20: Pad pit 24 looking south-east



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