

4th August 2023

Our ref: 27220/A5/DM/GW

Planning and Regeneration,
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council,
The Hinckley Hub,
Rugby Road,
Hinckley, LE10 0FR

Dear Sir/Madam,

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A MULTI-USE CONCRETE PAD
NW8, MIRA TECHNOLOGY PARK, WATLING STREET, NUNEATON**

On behalf of HORIBA MIRA Ltd ('the Applicant'), we hereby submit a full planning application to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council ('HBBC' or 'the Council') for the proposed construction of a multi-use concrete pad structure, to be used in association with the adjacent TIC-IT test track at MIRA Technology Park, Watling Street, Nuneaton ('the Application Site'). The Description of Development for the application is as follows:

"Construction of a multi-use concrete pad to allow the erection of temporary event structures, with associated areas for servicing and parking"

In addition to this covering letter, the application comprises the following documents and drawings:

- Completed Application Form;
- Site Location Plan;
- Block Plan;
- Temporary Building Illustrative Layout;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage, prepared by BCAL;
- Archaeological Evaluation, prepared by University of Leicester Archaeological Services;
- Ecological Walkover, prepared by Middlemarch; and
- Great Crested Newt HSI Assessment and eDNA Survey Report, prepared by Middlemarch.

The requisite fee of £2,092 (inc. service charge) has been paid via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-11954412).

Background

The Application Site is located within the Motor Industry Research Association ('MIRA') land holding known as the 'HORIBA-MIRA Works and Proving Ground'. The wider estate measures approximately 340ha and comprises the test track facilities and a range of associated employment and research and development ('R&D') floorspace.

Located at the northern end of the wider MIRA estate, adjacent to the west of the existing test track, the Site is known as "northwest building 8 ('NW8') as planning permission was previously secured for a

building (NW8) at this location. The Site comprises undeveloped land and is predominantly grassed and bound by an existing belt of landscaping/hedgerow around the eastern, western and southern boundaries.

MIRA is designated as an Employment Allocation (ref. HIG17) in the Development Plan and as an Enterprise Zone for Transport, designated by the Government in 2012 (and expanded in 2015). The Enterprise Zone seeks to support additional workspace for research and development and support the objective of MIRA to become the largest transport innovation hub in the UK and Europe. This provides the impetus for new employment generating development at the Site.

The Site lies within Flood Zone 1, benefits from a low risk of surface water flooding and is not located within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone. Therefore, the Site is at a low risk of flooding.

Planning History

Application Site

The Application Site is subject to the following planning history:

Site Address	Application Reference	Description	Determination
NW7 and NW8	17/00242/FUL	Erection of two workshop and office buildings (Use Class B1(b)) including car parking and landscape	Granted 20 th October 2017
TIC-IT Test Track	18/00425/FUL	Construction of a Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) testing track, a control tower and storage building, ground works, landscaping and associated infrastructure	Granted 25 th September 2018
NW7 (adjacent site but drainage strategy incorporates potential for NW8)	18/00679/FUL	Erection of workshop and office building (Use Class B1(b)) including car parking and landscaping	Granted 14 th November 2018

Planning permission ref. 17/0024/FUL for the development of Plots NW7 and NW8 was not implemented and expired on 20th October 2020.

The development of Plot NW7 (ref. 18/00679/FUL) and the TIC-IT test track (ref. 18/00425/FUL) have been completed and are currently in operation.

Wider MIRA Estate

The wider MIRA Technology Park has Outline Planning Permission (ref. 11/00360/OUT) for the following development, granted 9th March 2012:

“Business technology campus comprising replacement MIRA Headquarters, office, research and manufacturing facilities, hotel and local facilities including retail/café/restaurant, indoor and outdoor leisure, ancillary energy generation plant equipment, internal access roads, car parking, landscaping, drainage and associated works and creation of new improvement access points, widening of A5, associated earth works and landscaping”.

A number of S73 applications to vary conditions attached to application ref. 11/00360/OUT, which relate to the phasing of development and improvements to the A5, and reserved matters applications have been subsequently granted by the Council. The Technology Park Master Permission is now 14/0661/CONDIT as a result of these changes.

Proposed Development

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a multi-use concrete pad, which can accommodate temporary workshop buildings in association with testing works on the adjacent track facilities. The concrete pad will also include an area for servicing, a HGV turning circle and car and HGV parking.

The concrete hardstanding will measure approximately 6,860sqm with a service yard, HGV turning circle and car and HGV parking to the southern boundary, and access via the existing internal road network. The hardstanding area could accommodate temporary structures of 20m x 70m and 20m x 14m.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The relevant Development Plan for HBBC comprises:

- Core Strategy DPD (December 2009); and
- Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (July 2016).

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (July 2021) and National Planning Policy Guidance ('NPPG') are also material considerations in assessing this planning application.

HBBC are currently undertaking a review of the Local Plan. The Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation concluded in March 2022. A further Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Local Plan is expected in spring 2024 following completion of evidence gathering, with adoption anticipated for August 2025. As the Local Plan Review is at an early stage, it is considered the draft policies have limited weight in the determination of planning applications.

Assessment of Proposed Development

Principle of Development

Sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. Paragraph 8 sets out the overarching objectives of the planning system, which includes "*an economic objective*" defined as establishing a "*strong, responsive competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity*". In addition, paragraph 11c states that development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

NPPF paragraph 83 states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 85 requires decisions to recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries.

MIRA is an existing employment site, as allocated within the Local Plan and emerging Local Plan Review.

Policy DM19 of the Local Plan and Emerging Policy EP03 of the Local Plan Review supports development of employment uses within existing employment areas.

MIRA is defined as a “Category A” Employment Site, which should be retained fully for employment uses, and as an Enterprise Zone, therefore the Site is considered suitable for development associated with supporting the wider function of MIRA. The Proposed Development seeks to provide additional and temporary workshop space to be used in conjunction with the existing TIC-IT test track facility, located adjacent to Plot NW8. The proposal ensures sufficient additional space for workshopping, when required, and ensures continued efficient and enhanced operations relating to the TIC-IT test track and the wider MIRA site.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD Policy DM6 and Policy NAT08 of the emerging Local Plan Review requires development proposals to demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation. On-site features should be retained, buffered and managed favourably to maintain the ecological value and a 10% biodiversity net gain (onsite in the first instance or through off-site mitigation or off-setting where appropriate). The removal or damage of such features shall only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated the proposal will result in no net loss of biodiversity and where the integrity of local ecological networks can be secured.

Of the habitats on site, the hedgerow is considered a Habitat of Principal Importance and will be retained. The hedgerow and trees to the eastern boundary were historically identified for potential roosting features and will be retained with no direct impacts on roosting bats anticipated. The hedgerow, trees and scrubs also provide opportunities for generalist and common species of nesting birds.

No standing water is present on site. However, two ponds are located within the immediate vicinity (20m and 60m north-east), two ponds within 250m and up to eleven additional ponds within a 500m radius. The ponds have been subject to monitoring as part of a great crested newt mitigation licence granted in 2019. No great crested newts have been recorded in the three nearest ponds and low numbers of individuals have been recorded within ponds in the surrounding area. However, the Site provides suitable terrestrial opportunities and forms part of a potential commuting route between ponds. Long-term impacts are considered unlikely given the small scale of the project. All ponds and suitable commuting and foraging habitats will be retained. Mitigation to prevent potential death or harm to great crested newts will be carried out in accordance with the recommendations by Middlemarch.

There is no evidence of badger setts on site, however footprints have been seen and evidence of foraging.

Grass snakes are known to be within the wider MIRA site. However, it is considered there is low probability of snakes on site.

A Construction Ecological Management Plan will set out principles to ensure protection of badgers, hares, nesting birds and reptiles.

The proposals will incorporate the retention of important habitats and the existing vegetation proposed to be removed as part of the proposals is considered low quality and not including any other significant biodiversity habitats. Therefore, the Proposed Development will have a negligible impact on biodiversity and any potential loss will be mitigated by the landscaping strategy being delivered as part of the Technology Park permission (ref. 14/00661/CONDIT) which includes the creation of a linear park.

Therefore, it is considered that the development is in accordance with adopted and emerging Development Plan policies.

Archaeology

Policy DM13 of the Site Allocations DPD seeks to preserve the borough's archaeology. Where a proposal has the potential to impact a site of archaeological interest, applications should be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where applicable, the results of a field evaluation detailing the significance of any affected asset.

An Archaeological Evaluation (June 2017) was prepared and submitted as part of application ref. 17/00242/FUL. As no development has occurred on the NW7 or NW8 site, it is considered that the conclusions of the Evaluation remain applicable.

The report concludes that 14no. evaluation trenches were devoid of archaeology, however two brick and mortar structures were located which had previously been partially revealed during the 2011 evaluation. The two brick structures are evidence of possible slit trenches constructed during the Second World War as positions to defend the airfield. One structure has been identified as a V-shaped three-man weapon slit based on diagrams within a Field Engineering (1944 edition) pamphlet. The second structure is probably a version of a weapon slit but no comparable diagram was available to confirm. All of these findings have already been recorded.

Transport and Parking

Policy DM18 of the Site Allocations DPD requires proposals to provide an appropriate level of parking provision.

The Application Site is part of the wider MIRA technology park (ref. 11/00360/OUT as amended) and previously planning permission was granted on site for a laboratory/workshop with associated car parking (ref. 17/00242/FUL). Traffic movements and implications have been addressed in the granting of applications ref. 11/00360/OUT and 17/00242/FUL and it is not considered that the Proposed Development will have any greater impact and is therefore acceptable.

On-site car and HGV parking is provided as part of the proposals, in accordance with Policy DM18.

Flood Risk & Drainage

Policy DM7 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD requires development to not create or exacerbate flooding.

Appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into development design, where possible, in accordance with Policies CC02 and CC03 of the emerging Local Plan Review.

The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of fluvial flooding.

A cut and fill operation has been carried out to plateau Plot NW8 and drainage works including an attenuation pond facility to the north-east of the site and drainage outfalls to the eastern edge to serve Plots NW7, NW8 and the TIC-IT test track. The existing drainage infrastructure was constructed in 2020 and is designed to accommodate a drained area of approximately 1.5ha.

The proposed drainage strategy follows the established strategy for Plot 7 and the TIC-IT test track. The existing infrastructure provides attenuation of flows to a standard of 1/100 years + climate change and

limits flows to a Qbar greenfield equivalent of 4.4l/s/Ha. The Plot NW8 size is 6,860sqm which is less than drained area the existing infrastructure can accommodate.

In addition, a positive surface water drainage system will be provided, collecting surface water from the hardstanding and discharging into the existing attenuation pond using a piped system.

Summary and Conclusions

Full planning permission is sought for the construction of a multi-use concrete pad at Plot NW8, with servicing and parking. The concrete pad is proposed to be used in association with the adjacent test track facilities and can accommodate temporary structures as and when required to provide additional workshop space.

The development is considered appropriate in this allocated employment site and Enterprise Zone and accords with national and local policies which seek to support economic growth and business innovation and adaption for industries, including the automotive industry.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of drainage, archaeology, transport and ecology with required mitigation.

Overall, it is deemed that the Proposed Development is in accordance with national guidance and policies included within the adopted and emerging Development Plan, and therefore should be approved without delay.

We look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been successfully registered and validated. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my colleague Graeme Warriner.

Yours faithfully



DANIELLA MARROCCO
Planning Associate



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