

**P/16/0270/FP**

**STUBBINGTON**

NATS

AGENT: BILFINGER GVA

THE ERECTION OF A NEW 25 METRE HIGH RADAR TOWER, RADAR EQUIPMENT CABIN WITHIN A SECURE FENCED COMPOUND AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT DAEDALUS AERODROME BROOM WAY FAREHAM PO13 9YA

***Report By***

Mark Wyatt. Direct Dial 01329 824704

***Site Description***

The application site is located in the south eastern corner of the Daedalus airfield, at the eastern end of the west to east runway operated by the MCA. The site for the radar itself is a 21 metre by 25 metre compound extending off the north eastern corner of this runway. The radar compound is currently laid to grass. It will be serviced by the eastern end of the east to west runway and the existing hard standing extending south for some 97 metre towards the east to west spine road (which is currently under construction) referred to as Daedalus Drive.

The first 35 metres of this access drive, off the spine road, is land within the Borough of Gosport. The proposal seeks to set the access gates back 7 metres from the spine road and re-fence along the access route. An application for the re-aligned gates, fencing and use of this access for the radar access is under consideration by Gosport Borough Council.

***Description of Proposal***

The proposal seeks full planning permission for a new radar tower with equipment cabin and secure fenced compound. The application is submitted by NATS (National Air Traffic Services) who require a facility to test both software and mechanical elements for their radar network without any impact on their actual operational radar service.

The radar itself is a curved antenna finished with orange and white stripes (which are set by Statutory Legislation). The antenna itself is approximately 15 metres tall and when operational will rotate. The radar is positioned centrally on top of a 10 metre high radar tower with an equipment container at ground level. This provides for a finished radar height of 25 metres. There are two lightning finials also proposed with a finished height of 27 metres above ground level.

***Policies***

The following policies and Guidance apply to this application:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

**Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy**

CS5 - Transport Strategy and Infrastructure

CS11 - Development in Portchester, Stubbington and Hill Head

CS14 - Development Outside Settlements

CS17 - High Quality Design

CS22 - Development in Strategic Gaps

### **Development Sites and Policies**

DSP3 - Impact on living conditions

### ***Relevant Planning History***

The following planning history is relevant within the Borough of Gosport:

16/00002/FULL: ERECTION OF 3 NO. TWO-STOREY BUILDINGS (USE CLASS B1/B2/B8) WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING - Permission 07/03/2016. The FBC reference for the consultation in this application was N/16/0001. No objection was raised under delegated powers.

15/00009/FULL: CONSTRUCTION OF SECTION OF EAST-WEST ROAD TO INCLUDE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PATHWAYS - Permission 26/02/2015. The FBC reference for the consultation in this application was N/15/0001. No objection was raised by the Planning Committee.

Other relevant Planning History in Fareham is as follows:

**P/13/0129/FP      ERECTION OF 41.25M HIGH RADIO TOWER WITH ASSOCIATED CABIN, NEW FENCING/GATES AROUND PERIMETER AND CAR PARKING AREA**

APPROVE                      08/04/2013

### ***Representations***

Letters of objection have been received from Lee Residents Association, 3 Norwich Place, Lee-on-the-Solent and 2 The Vale, Locks Heath:

- The radar emitter is significantly closer to residents homes and an educational establishment than is normal for this type of transmission.
- Concern that 'stray' emissions may be of sufficient levels to be of detriment to nearby residents.
- There is also concern that if the aerial is used to test different radar combinations the aerial focus and side lobe energy levels may present unknown risks.
- The Lee Residents Association accept that the height of the mast is to ensure the essential vertical separation for the radar beam and the local population. The mast should not set any sort of precedent for an acceptable height within Daedalus.
- Concern that such a tall tower may mean that the establishment of a northwest - south east grass runway would be impossible.
- A similar radar at HMS Cambridge caused significant complaints about interference, car alarms and various other nuisance complaints. Do we have guarantees that this will not happen here?

A suitable situation would be to limit the transmission arc so that it does not transit towards public property.

Two letters from the applicant in response to the representations:

- There would need to be adequate separation between the radar and any grass runway, however we are not aware of any runway proposals near the site and there would likely be objections from residents if aircraft started taking off over properties

- A Radiological Assessment is submitted with the application to show there are no adverse effects to public health.
- NATS has agreed, through discussion with the MCA, to commission an independent survey to ensure that we will not effect the MCA operations. This survey will be undertaken prior to first transmission with mitigation if necessary
- NATS proposes to carry out a full airfield survey as a safeguarding chart which will be available to the landowner and airport authority. This will ensure that the operational airfield and its tenants are not affected by any future development
- NATS is talking to the potential occupier of the 18 metre high Pegasus building in Gosport and NATS see no reason why the radar will have any impact on their business. However the first transmission will be independently assessed for any radiological impact.
- The public consultation before the application was submitted was very successful and received positive comments from the Lee Residents Association and in the local press
- No one attended from Bayntun Drive and there have been no representations to the application form these addresses either.
- The local MP has also been met with to answer her questions regarding the site.
- NATS appreciates that in the past there has been interference with analogue TV's and some vehicle electronics caused by Non NATS radars.
- To ensure that any risk of interference is removed, all Radar transmission are governed by OFCOM and are operated within strict frequency bandwidths. The NATS Radar is subject to these regulations and any interference will be immediately investigated and the transmission stopped until a solution is found.
- The NATS antenna was previously sited at Heathrow Airport, in the middle of Terminals 1-3 and its tower formed part of the multi storey Car park. It operated there from the early 1980's and NATS has no record of interference with car electronics or TV's in adjacent hotels.

### ***Consultations***

Gosport Borough Council:

- Concern raised that inadequate information has been submitted to assess whether the proposed radar would prejudice the ability of businesses locating within the Enterprise Zone to operate to their full potential.
- Members were also concerned at the impact upon residential amenity and, should the application be considered favourably, request conditions for the following:
  - o Site compound location;
  - o Measures to control construction dust, dirt and smoke;
  - o Hours of work; and
  - o lighting details

Airfield Manager:

- The Airport Authority would like to see an obligation that the applicant satisfy the landowner and airport authority through a qualified technical study that there is no negative impact or adverse effects to the current or future aviation interests, equipment, planned or intended development of the airport and its adjoining environment, or negative impact on current or future tenants and their interests.
- The applicant should continue to provide up to date safeguarding data to the airport authority.
- Without these obligations being fulfilled the Airport Authority would be unable to support the project.

### ***Planning Considerations - Key Issues***

The key issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- The principle of development
- The Daedalus Enterprise Zone and the Airport
- Landscape impact
- Neighbouring amenity and health implications
- Other matters

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT:

The application site is, for the purposes of planning policy, within the designated countryside and Strategic Gap such that policies CS14 and CS22 of the Core Strategy apply. The site is outside of the Daedalus employment allocation designated by policy CS12.

CS14 seeks to restrict new built development outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries to that essential to agriculture, forestry or essential infrastructure. The reason for this policy is "...to protect the countryside and coastline from development which would adversely affect its landscape character, appearance and function".

Whilst not a policy requirement to consider other sites, the submission sets out that NATS has considered twenty one other sites for the proposed radar. These are listed in the submission as well as the reason why they have been discounted.

The radar will not be directly linked to the Daedalus Airport operations and it is not directly related to the air traffic arriving and departing from the airfield. However, it does feed into a NATS system which supports twenty three other radar sites in order to provide a blanket cover of air traffic over the UK. The application sets out that in order for the applicant to maintain the continued operation of these radar sites, an additional radar site is required with the primary purpose of providing NATS with a radar for training and testing purposes without the need to impact upon the operational radar network.

Having this dedicated radar facility is key to maintaining the current NATS radar surveillance and to ensure the very highest levels of safety for air traffic control and navigation. Given the nature of air traffic, there are no set identifiable times that the radar would be used. It would be used as necessary by the applicant.

In support of the application the applicant sets out therefore that the radar is required "...in the interest of national security". It is considered that the proposal would be acceptable under the terms of policy CS14 in so far as it is "essential infrastructure" necessary for the safety of our air space.

To further strengthen this conclusion paragraph 31 of the NPPF advises that Local Authorities should, working with other stakeholders, develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development including the growth of airports. Appropriate air traffic control will inevitably assist in this growth.

#### THE DAEDALUS ENTERPRISE ZONE AND THE AIRPORT:

Representations have been received about the possible impacts of the radar on the operations of the airfield and also the impacts upon potential businesses within the buildings known as Daedalus Park to the south of the radar site, within the boundary of Gosport Borough.

For the land allocated by policy CS12, the policy requires developments to not adversely affect the existing or future potential general aviation operation of the airfield. Similarly the policy also seeks to deliver development that retains and strengthens the marine and aviation employment clusters. As described above, the application site is outside of the allocation for CS12, however there is some concern that the proposed radar will affect the airport growth and the success of businesses in the enterprise zone.

It is acknowledged that the NPPF seeks to build a strong, competitive economy by planning positively for the location of and expansion of clusters or networks or knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries (para 21), such as those advanced manufacturing uses sought at the Solent Enterprise Zone. However, the NPPF does advise that when planning for airports plans should take account of the growth and role that they play in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs (para 33).

Additionally the NPPF when supporting proposals for high quality communications infrastructure, such as telecom masts, advises that Local Planning Authorities should have evidence that the telecommunications infrastructure does not cause significant and irreparable interference with other electrical equipment including air traffic services (para 44).

It is noted that when the MCA applied for the 41 metre tall radio mast (also outside of the CS12 allocation) the impact of this operation was not challenged and nor was the planning permission conditional on the submission of any technical data to ensure that there was no impact upon other users of the Daedalus site. Similarly no objection was raised at the time by the airfield manager.

Similar to the MCA radio mast, in granting permission for the development of Daedalus Park, Gosport Borough Council have not imposed conditions in relation to the frequencies of any testing equipment or potential interference.

Notwithstanding this, the applicant has consulted with the MCA Coastguard and has agreed to commission an independent survey to ensure that the radar will not effect their operations. Similarly, NATS is sharing technical data with one of the potential aerospace users for one of the buildings on Daedalus Park to demonstrate that the radar will not have any impact upon their business operations. NATS has indicated that since the antenna is not operational and would be used for training purposes only, it would be possible to blank radiation transmissions from the radar in a very small arc in the direction of Daedalus Park. This, it is understood, would address the concerns raised in this regard.

In terms of the impact of the proposed radar on the airfield operations, it is noted that there was no objection to the MCA mast from the airfield manager at that time. NATS has also confirmed that as land owner the Borough Council is negotiating the relevant safeguards and technical requirements of the radar within the commercial lease terms such that the future protection of growth of the airport will be provided for by the landowner in any event.

NATS has advised that they will undertake an airport survey and safeguarding chart. They will also undertake an independent radiology impact assessment on first transmission. Officers believe these matters can be addressed through the imposition of appropriate planning conditions and are looking to agree the draft wording of the conditions with the applicant in advance of the Planning Committee meeting. The agreed draft planning conditions will be provided as an update to Members in advance of the meeting.

## LANDSCAPE IMPACT:

As well as being within the countryside, the application site is also within the designated Strategic Gap. The policy test in policy CS22 is that development should not affect the integrity of the gap and the physical and visual separation of settlements.

The integrity of the gap in this part of the borough is that of the open, short cut grass airfield. This open character of the airfield, functions well as an effective part of the gap in the visual and physical separation of Stubbington and Lee-on-the-Solent.

The proposed radar, whilst not directly related to the airfield operations, is a feature related to aviation activities and as such its location on an airport would not appear as alien in the landscape.

The radar tower and resultant height of the radar is necessary to ensure that the radar beam clears the necessary topography at Portsdown Hill and the Isle of Wight and buildings on Daedalus. Whilst the radar is of some height, there are other large buildings just to the southwest of the site, such as the longstanding Overlord and Dunning hangars (within Gosport) and the permitted Pegasus building on Daedalus Park at 18 metres tall.

Given the design of the radar will not appear as alien on an airfield, that there are large buildings that exist and are permitted nearby and the fact that as a consequence of the proposal, the integrity of the strategic gap will remain to the effect that Stubbington and Lee-on-the-Solent will not have coalesced, Officers do not consider the Gap will be materially harmed.

## NEIGHBOURING AMENITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:

The nearest residential properties are to the south of the site, within the Borough of Gosport. These dwellings lie some 140 metres from the radar itself. Whilst there is no dispute that the radar will be seen from these dwellings, it is considered that the radar is of a far enough distance that the rotating radar will not give rise to any material harm to the amenity of these dwellings in terms of being overbearing or creating any overshadowing, given their location due south of the radar.

Representations have raised the implications for radar on public health, specifically the impact upon the residential properties to the south and for students in CEMAST.

The NPPF advises that with communications infrastructure applications should be supported with a statement that self certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection Guidelines (ICNIRP).

In this case NATS has submitted the necessary self-certification for ICNIRP compliance. NATS has additionally confirmed that the radar operates under the frequencies authorised by Ofcom and therefore there should not be any interference or health issues as a result of the radar operations.

## OTHER MATTERS:

Third party comments have expressed concern at the proposal essentially ending any aspirations for a grass runway. There are no plans identified in the Development Plan for a

grass runway in this part of the airfield. It is also noted that in the Council's recent consultation on the Daedalus Vision, there was no grass runway proposed in the vision other than the retention of the existing grass runway which runs from the south west to the north east parallel to and on the southeastern side of the main runway.

The application is accompanied by an ecology report which indicates that there are no notable species on the application site.

The access, as is described above, is taken from Daedalus Drive from within the Gosport Borough. Subject to a suitably worded planning condition requiring the grant of a planning permission for the re-aligned fence, gate and use of the hard standing for radar access, the proposed access is acceptable.

References to radar interference with car alarms and television reception are made in third party comments. The radar referred to is an MOD air traffic radar and so is not a radar NATS has any control over. In any event the radar transmission is governed by Ofcom and operated within specific band widths. Any interference would be investigated by Ofcom and the transmission stopped until a solution to the interference is found.

#### CONCLUSION:

In summary the proposal will provide an important piece of essential infrastructure to ensure the safety of air traffic control. The proposal is not considered to be an alien feature on an airport and the siting of the radar is such that the integrity of the strategic gap will not be materially harmed and the settlements of Lee-on-the-Solent and Stubbington will remain both physically and visually separate.

The proposal is not considered to pose any health risks or be a risk to the Search and Rescue operations of the MCA. The applicant will ensure that any transmission from the radar does not affect the current or future airfield operations or the businesses located in the Enterprise Zone.

The proposal will be a sufficient distance from neighbouring residential properties such that there is no material harm to the amenity of these dwellings.

Officers consider that the proposal is in accordance with policies CS5, CS12, CS14, CS22 and DSP3 of the Development Plan and is recommended for Permission accordingly.

#### ***Recommendation***

PERMISSION subject to conditions.

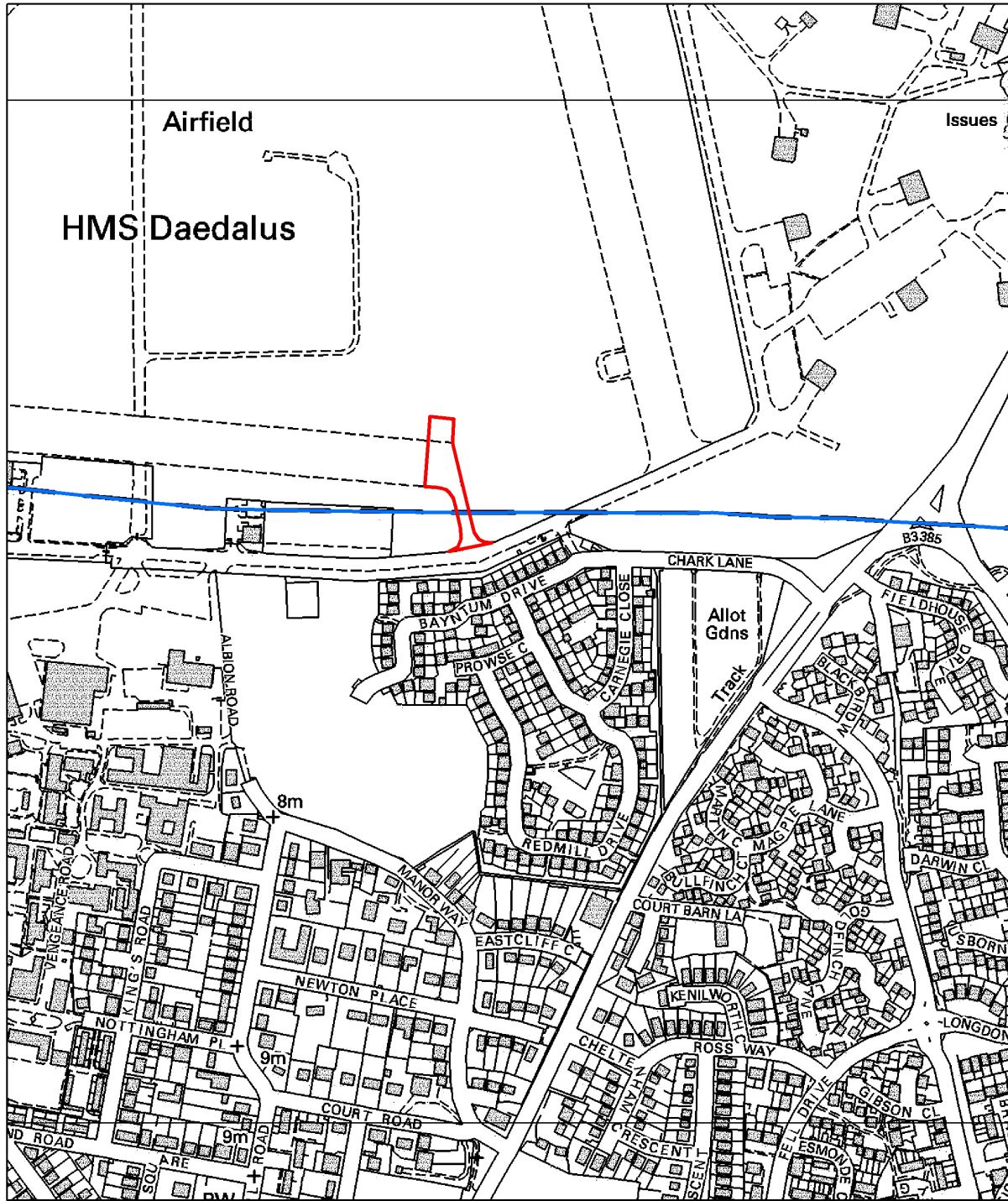
A list of suggested planning conditions will be provided as an update in advance of the Planning Committee meeting

#### ***Background Papers***

See "relevant planning history" section above

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL



Daedalus Aerodrome  
Scale 1:5000

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