



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

SITE: FORMER LINDE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, MERTHYR TYDFIL, CF48 4LA

**PROPOSAL: VARIATION OF CONDITION 7 PLANNING PERMISSION P/15/0130/F FOR
CONSTRUCTION OF VEHICLE TEST FACILITY TO BE USED ANCILLARY TO THE EXISTING INDUSTRIAL
USE. DEMOLITION OF HIGH BAY BUILDINGS, ERECTION OF LIGHTING COLUMNS AND ASSOCIATED
WORKS (FULL)**

CLIENT: LEE WAKEMAN LIMITED



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is located to the south of Pentrebach Village, approximately 3 miles south of Merthyr Tydfil.
- 1.2 The site comprises the former Linde Industrial Estate located on elevated ground to the east of the A4054 and the long established Merthyr Tydfil Industrial Park.
- 1.3 Access to the site and the Merthyr Tydfil Industrial Park is via a roundabout on the A4054 just north of Troedyrhiw.
- 1.4 As the attached aerial photograph confirms, the closest residential properties are located on the estate to the north and to the south in the settlement of Troedyrhiw which straddles the A4054.



- 1.5 To the east, the open countryside rises steeply towards Fochriw and Bedlinog.
- 1.6 General Dynamics has developed a successful production facility at the site delivering complex technical engineering solutions to vehicle platforms for the MOD.



- 1.7 Their team of highly skilled engineering and technical staff drawn for the local area are essential to the continued success of the company's Merthyr site.
- 1.8 General Dynamics are committed to continued training and development to grow their team to secure further specialist contracts and ensure the long term future of the site.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 In 2012, General Dynamics secure a prestigious £390 million MOD contract at the Merthyr site for the delivery of Ajax vehicles, which runs to 2024
- 2.2 To service this contract, the company has developed the site to provide necessary modern testing facilities.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 In June 2015 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council granted conditional planning permission for the construction of a dedicated vehicular test track facility (LPA Ref. P/15/0130/E).
- 3.2 This consent limited use of the test track facility to Monday to Friday.
- 3.3 Whilst upgrades to the vehicles produced at the site involves an internal process completed and tested on the production line, all vehicles are subject to 'factory acceptance testing (FAT)' prior to handover to the MOD.
- 3.4 This is a milestone in the delivery of the vehicle involving on average a 30 – 40 minute test on the external test track.
- 3.5 To improved efficiency and ensure compliance with the terms of the MOD contract to deliver a prescribed number of vehicles each week, the company sought and gained



planning permission to vary condition 7 to allow the test track to be used on Saturdays between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm (LPA Ref. P/18/0346).

3.6 A full planning history of the site is attached as Appendix A.

4.0 PROPOSAL

4.1 Since the 2015 / 2018 planning permissions, track testing has been undertaken within the prescribed times at intervals through Monday to Saturday.

4.2 Unfortunately, the timing of vehicles leaving the production line doesn't always follow a predetermined programme as on-going testing on the production line results in the need for remediation actions and then subsequent re-testing, before release for external track testing.

4.3 As the attached record of external track testing for the period 3rd to 10th February 2020 confirm, the number of tests undertaken daily is usually 1 – 2, with the track being utilised at intervals for less than 4 hours a day.

Date	Access Times		Short Description	
	In	Out	Dynamic Area	Test Track
01/2/20	09:55	10:10	Drift Test –Vehicle to drive as idle revs over 30meters	
05/2/20	08:25	12:15	FAT (Slopes), Neutral/Pivot turn testing	FAT(30km drive, Accel/Brake Test)
06/2/20	10:35	11:20		Test Emergency Lighting in vehicle while driving for vibrations
06/2/20	12:30	15:15		Driver training – under instruction
07/2/20	08:10	09:00		Skin drive followed by brake & acceleration test
10/2/20	14:25	15:35	Drift Test –Vehicle to drive as idle revs over 30meters	

4.4 In nearly all instances, it is possible to maintain all external track testing in the prescribed periods Monday to Saturday.



- 4.5 A recent internal review of production processes and MOD contract requirements identified a serious risk to delivery programme for vehicles contractually due for delivery on Mondays, where, due to re-testing on the production line, the release of vehicles are delayed and can't be completed in time for external testing on a Saturday.
- 4.6 Whilst the company are keen to limit external track testing to the approved times Monday to Saturday, to meet the requirements of the contact, the company is seeking a temporary limited extension of the use of the external testing track from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on Sundays.
- 4.7 The findings of the attached acoustic report which accompanied the 2018 application was accepted by the EHO in granting consent for the use of the track on Saturdays *'proposed weekend daytime noise criteria at all identified critical NSPs are indicated to be met based on a tank using the track for a maximum of 30 mins in any 1 hour period'* in recognition of the public's sensitivity to Sunday working, the Applicant is initially seeking a temporary consent for 4 years from the date of consent.
- 4.8 Whilst the intermittent use of the external track on a Sunday is rarely likely to exceed 2 tests or a 2 hour period, to allay residents' potential concerns, the Applicant is willing to form and co-ordinate a monitoring group to assess the possible impact of the extended use of the track.

Monitoring Group

- 4.9 It is proposed a monitoring group would comprise the Local Ward Member(s) representatives of the local community / community groups (2 – 3 people), a representative from the Council and a nominated member of the company's management group.
- 4.10 In this respect, the Applicant would be willing to accept a suitably detailed consent requiring them to set up a monitoring group within 3 months of consent being granted.



Appendix A

P/18/0346	Variation of condition 7 of planning permission P/15/0130 to allow the test track to be used on Saturdays	Approved 21.12.2018
P/15/0130	Construction of vehicular test facility to be used ancillary to the existing industrial use. Demolition of high bay buildings, erection of lighting columns and associated works	Approved 25.06.2015
P/12/0316	Create a 4500 m ² test track facility to supplement existing test track facility	Approved 13.05.2013
P/08/0117	Erection of high bay detached building	Approved 13.05.2008
P/03/0339	Erection of detached building (stripping plant)	Approved 27.08.2003
P/01/0210	Provision of unloading canopies to the north and south end elevations of the main factory building.	Approved 27.06.2001
P/00/0300	Installation of 2 No. storage tanks with palisade enclosure	Approved 13.09.2000

