

Mabley Planning Limited
22 Gelliwastad Road
Pontypridd CF37 2BW

Neath Port Talbot CBC
Planning Department
Via email

19th April 2024

Sir/Madam

Bwlch ffos Quarry, Mynydd Resolfen, South of Cwmgwrach

General Permitted Development Order Part 23: Class B.

On behalf of Performance Aggregates Limited, notification is hereby given that it is their intention to extract mineral from Bwlch Ffos Quarry, Mynydd Resolfen, south of Cwmgwrach.

The intention is to complete the extraction and restoration of the quarry in accordance with the provisions of Part 23, Class B of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 as amended. This allows for the “*removal of material of any description from a mineral-working deposit other than a stockpile*”.

Development is not permitted if:

(a) the developer has not previously notified the mineral planning authority in writing of his intention to carry out the development and supplied them with the appropriate details;

(b) the deposit covers a ground area exceeding 2 hectares, unless the deposit contains no mineral or other material which was deposited on the land more than 5 years before the development; or

(c) the deposit derives from the carrying out of any operations permitted under Part 6 of this Schedule or any Class in a previous development order which it replaces.

The requirements set out in Clause B.1 are addressed as follows;

(a) This letter represents formal notification to the Minerals Planning Authority. With regards to the “*appropriate details*” as set out in Para. B.3, the following information is provided;

- The nature of the development is the recovery of approx. 450,000 tonnes of high quality sandstone product from a dormant quarry;
- The attached plan (ref: “Topographic Survey”) illustrates the exact location of the mineral-working deposit;
- The vehicular route for access to the site is determined by existing forestry tracks. Access to the public highway is gained via the Cwmgwrach Railhead site, to the B4242 and the A465;

- The deposit has become available as a result of the cessation of extraction from the site in approx. 2019.

(b) The deposit does not cover more than 2ha. The original Bwlch ffos Quarry extended to some 40 hectares when it became operational during the 1990s. The completion of extraction and subsequent restoration of the substantive majority of the site has resulted in potential operational area that is focused on two modest extraction areas. These are illustrated on the accompanying drawing and extend to approximately 1.4 hectares (some 0.9 and 0.5 hectares respectively). The conclusion is therefore reached that the total extraction area will not exceed the two hectare limit as imposed by the terms of the GDPO.

(c) The deposit does not derive from the carrying out of any operations permitted under Part 6.

In summary, the completion of extraction from Bwlch ffos and the restoration of the remnants of a site that has remained unsecured and unprotected for some five years can only be achieved by the current mechanism.

PAL proposes to process the material on site, at the location of the former processing plant immediately to the West of the larger extraction area. This will be undertaken using mobile plant that will be temporarily based on the site. The existing groundwater drainage network will be reviewed and maintained as necessary to ensure that the historic arrangement of the sites continue to be used where possible and to achieve appropriate water management.

PAL has estimated that there is a reserve of some 450,000 tonnes of material at the site. The intention is that this will be worked from the two identified extraction areas over a period of approximately one year. It is proposed to undertake only minimal blasting at the site.

Restoration of the extraction areas will be achieved using overburden that remains on site from the previous operations, and PAL will be happy to liaise with NPTCBC and other stakeholders to secure an appropriate landform and afteruse/aftercare regime on the site. A scheme will be provided in accordance with PAL looks forward to bringing over 20 years of extraction operations on the site to a successful close.

The saleable product will be transferred via existing internal forestry roads to the Cwmgwrach Railhead (the former Unity Mine surface site). PAL has recently taken control of that site and intends to continue the use of the site to store minerals, in accordance with the provisions of planning permission P2009/0176: "Respreading Of Temporary Mine Development, Construction Of A Mineral Stocking And Loading Pad, Addition To Height And Landscaping Of Existing Screen Bunds Together With The Storage Of Mine And Associated Equipment".

Mineral material from Bwlch ffos will be temporarily stored within the area permitted in accordance with P2009/0176, and operated in accordance with the relevant approved plans and the planning conditions. In respect of the operational requirements, this will include:

Condition 6 – appropriate fuel bunding provisions;

Condition 7 - hours of operations as stated;

Condition 8 - hours of loading of vehicles as stated;

Condition 9 – dust mitigation measures;

Condition 12 – stocking not to exceed 4m in height;

Condition 13 – wheel wash measures;

Condition 15 – limit of number of lorry movements per day (100) and hours of movements as stated;

Condition 16 – no nuisance caused by illumination to any residential or light sensitive properties.

The likelihood from the outset is that the quarried material will be removed entirely by road transport. The intention of PAL is to reintroduce rail haulage as soon as possible to the site. This would involve minor clearance works to the existing tracks, as opposed to any major repair works.

Closure

PAL is committed to the completion of quarrying from Bwlch ffos Quarry, and to its successful and final restoration. By completing this process, a public liability will be removed from Mynydd Resolven, and an appropriate restoration can be achieved.

The permitted development mechanism is the more appropriate and effective way of meeting this objective, and the established extraction areas and forestry tracks can ensure that there would be no adverse environmental or amenity impacts.

Furthermore, the continued use of a permitted site at the Cwmgwrach Railhead, with the potential to reintroduce rail-borne movement is a compelling reason that the mineral planning authority should consider the request in a positive manner.

Please do not hesitate if you require further information.

Yours faithfully

Will Ryan

Mabley Planning Limited