

GWRHYD QUARRY, PONTARDAWE

PLANNING STATEMENT

Planning Application Reference P2023/0861 - s73 Planning Application (Location of Saw Shed)



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Photos (Front Cover)

- Swansea Arena
- A465 Heads of the Valleys Dualling – Section 3 Brynmawr to Tredegar

Courtesy of Artisan Stone Supplies Limited (Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry)



Proposed Development Overview

Site:	Gwrhyd Quarry, Gwrhyd Road, Pontardawe, SA9 2SB
Proposed Development:	<i>Proposed restoration, quarry lateral extension and erection of new saw shed without compliance with condition 2 of planning permission ref. P2023/0861 dated 4 March 2025 to allow for a change to the location of the new saw shed, within the established quarry buildings and plant area.</i>
Applicant:	Artisan Stone Supplies Limited

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is made under section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ('s73') on behalf of Artisan Stone Supplies Limited (the Applicant) for determination by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council as mineral planning authority.
- 1.2 This submission relates to Gwrhyd Quarry, Pontardawe, near Swansea, SA9 2SB. The extent of the quarry and adjacent land in control of the Applicant is shown on Drawing No. A 1.2 (Rev B) August 2025 and is included as Appendix 2.0 of this planning application.
- 1.3 The Proposed Development is for the continuation of:
- proposed restoration, quarry lateral extension and erection of new saw shed without compliance with condition 2 of planning permission ref. P2023/0861 dated 4 March 2025 to allow for a change to the location of the new saw shed, within the established quarry buildings and plant area.*
- 1.4 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support this s73 submission. It describes the proposed changes to planning permission reference (PP ref.) P2023/0861 and the reasons for them.

2.0 THE APPLICANT

- 2.1 Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry is the trading name of Artisan Stone Supplies Limited (Artisan) which was founded in 2006, with the mission to:
- Provide the highest quality, Welsh Blue Pennant Natural Stone to the Building and Landscape Industries, throughout Britain, whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our staff.*
- 2.2 From 2014, the Applicant operated Gwrhyd Quarry under a lease agreement and in 2025 obtained the freehold ownership of the quarry and adjacent land.
- 2.3 Artisan has a workforce of 20 staff based in South Wales, with administration split between Gwrhyd Quarry and the company's Northamptonshire office.

3.0 STATUTORY BACKGROUND

Pre-Application Engagement

- 3.1 This s73 application has been prepared following pre-application engagement with Carmarthenshire County Council in their role as planning adviser to Neath Port Talbot Council (NPT) on minerals and waste matters.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 3.2 The 'parent' planning permission P2010/0026 (2011 consent) for the lateral extension of Gwrhyd Quarry and erection of a new saw shed was subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES).
- 3.3 NPT issued an EIA Screening Opinion, dated 13 October 2023, for the most recent planning

permission which included an extension to the life of Gwrhyd Quarry, confirming that the proposals did not constitute EIA development.

- 3.4 Under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (2017 EIA Regs) Description of Development 13 - *Changes and Extensions*, the current proposals would *constitute a change to Schedule 2 development (paragraph 2 – quarries and open cast mining and peat extraction (unless included in Schedule 1))*.

- 3.5 The applicable thresholds and criteria¹ which apply to this category of development are:

All development except the construction of buildings or other ancillary structures where the new floorspace does not exceed 1,000 square metres.

- 3.6 There is extant planning permission for a new saw shed with a floorspace of approximately 1760 square metres (m²) to the southwest of the quarry buildings and plant area. These s73 proposals are for the construction of a new saw shed with a much smaller floorspace of approximately 662.8 m² located in the northeast of the buildings and plant complex area.

- 3.7 As these proposals do not exceed the relevant thresholds or meet the criteria set out in paragraph 3.5 above and would not be located within a 'sensitive area' as defined in the 2017 EIA Regs, it is concluded that they do not constitute EIA development.

4.0 GWRHYD QUARRY

- 4.1 Gwrhyd Quarry occupies an area of approximately 9.2 hectares (ha) and is approximately centred on National Grid Reference SN737089. The Gwrhyd Quarry landholding extends to approximately 29.3ha and includes agricultural land around the periphery of the quarry.
- 4.2 The quarry is within a rural area comprising agricultural land and common land for grazing.
- 4.3 Access is via a gravel surfaced track from the Gwrhyd Road, some 4 miles north of Pontardawe and approximately 3.6km to the south-west of the village of Cwmllynfell. The largest local population centre is Swansea which is situated some 17.5km to the south-west via the A4067.
- 4.4 The site originally formed part of a hill farm run by Mr and Mrs W H Davies who established the quarry in early 2000 before it was acquired by Marshalls in August 2008. Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry operated the Site under lease from 2014 and in 2025 obtained the freehold ownership.
- 4.5 Today it comprises an active building and dimension stone quarry with associated mineral waste tips, stockpile areas, processing areas for the cutting and dressing of the stone, together with restored areas that sit within peripheral agricultural land.
- 4.6 The quarry contains reserves of Blue Pennant Sandstone, a subgreywacke or lithic sandstone with high quartz grain content.
- 4.7 Blue Pennant Sandstone remains among the best slip resistant paving available, with the stone materials produced at the quarry retaining its "non-slip" properties as they wear. The Applicant states that the stone has been independently tested and is completely frost resistant and has extremely low abrasion values making it one of the most durable materials available. Elsewhere, in non-masonry

¹ Column 2 of Schedule 2 of the 2017 EIA Regs.

markets, Blue Pennant Sandstone is extracted as “high PSV” (polished stone value) aggregate for its use in high specification road surfacing due to its skid resistance and hard-wearing properties. Gwrhyd also has planning permission to supply high quality aggregates from the site.

- 4.8 At Gwrhyd Quarry, the Blue Pennant Sandstone is extracted from beds which occur naturally at the quarry face. It is available in riven and sawn formats and is completely unique in colour which will vary from rust and ochre browns through to the coolest blues and greys. Variations in colour and texture are a natural feature of the stone.
- 4.9 The high quality of the Pennant Sandstone extracted from Gwrhyd Quarry has resulted in a sustained demand for its use as paving, walling and masonry products such as windowsills, hearths, mantels, and all types of Flagstones. The stone is also sold for dry stone walling products. Stone from the quarry has been used in many high-profile building projects, including at the main entrance of Swansea’s National Waterfront Museum, the A465 Heads of the Valleys scheme, the Senedd building and Maesteg Town Hall.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 Mineral extraction operations at Gwrhyd Quarry were established in January 2000 following the grant of planning permission, on appeal in October 1999, for the extraction of Pennant Sandstone.
- 5.2 Gwrhyd Quarry has the benefit of several planning permissions relating to the winning and working of the mineral reserve. Key permissions are set out in Table 1 below and the extant permission to which this planning application related is highlighted green.

Table 1: Planning History

Permission Reference	Decision Issue Date	Description
APP/76930/A/99/513254/T/P3	12/10/1999	The extraction of Pennant Sandstone, trimming and dressing stone to provide quality paving, stone slates, cladding, and walling stone.
P/2002/0256	07/05/2002	An extension to the area of the quarrying operation to accommodate a temporary waste mound.
P/2002/0318	07/05/2002	Section 73 application to amend the phasing of the scheme and to provide for a temporary waste mound.
P2005/1308	15/12/2005	Section 73 application to amend condition M of planning permission reference (PP ref:) APP/76930/A/99/513254/T/P3 (Related to lorry movements).
P2006/1445	12/12/2006	Increase of HGV movements to seven on any working day under Condition 1 of PP ref: P2005/1308.
P2010/0026	18/08/2011	Proposed restoration, quarry lateral extension and erection of new saw shed.
P2011/0861	22/09/2011	Submission of details pursuant to Condition 59 of Planning Permission P2010/0026 (Approved on the 18/8/11) in respect of a scheme for artificial bird boxes.
P2012/0270	17/07/2012	Proposed schemes under condition 33 and 34 of PP ref: P2010/0026 - Pollution prevention measures and surface water arrangements.

Permission Reference	Decision Issue Date	Description
P2013/0592	08/08/2013	Details relating to conditions 55 (site liaison committee) and 56 (technical working party) of PP ref: P2010/0026 granted on 18 August 2011.
P2017/0036	06/02/2018 25/06/2019 (Revision 1) to incorporate approvals under PP ref: P2018/0580	Variation of Condition 15 of PP ref: P2010/0026 to allow for: a) An output of 750 tonnes of dimensional blockstone and/or masonry products per working week for the duration of the planning permission (a maximum of 2x24 tonne carrying capacity vehicles and 5x20 tonne carrying capacity vehicles per day) b) The removal of 700 tonnes per working week of aggregate produced from the waste stone resulting from the dimensional stone and masonry production process for a limited period of 2.5 years (a maximum of 7x20 tonne carrying capacity vehicles per day).
P2018/0580	25/06/2019	Application for the discharge of conditions 4 (Operational phasing), 9 (Daily records), 16 (vehicle control signage), 17 (control of deleterious material on the highway), 31 (landscaping plan), 34 (stocking area plan), 38 (soil storage volumes plan) and condition 44 (restoration strategy) attached to PP ref: P2017/0036.
P/2020/0709	Withdrawn 8/10/2021	Variation of condition 7 (to extend the time limit for the exportation of aggregate and waste materials) & condition 8 (removal of parts 8d and 8e, relating to HGV tonnages) attached to planning permission P2017/0036.
P/2022/0791	12/12/2022	The re-siting and use of a general storage unit and the siting and use of a masonry saw, employee welfare facilities, units for general storage and sheds for housing masonry saws (retrospective).
(P/2022/0790)	12/12/2022	Prior approval for the construction of a new saw shed building.
P2023/0861	04/03/2025	Proposed restoration, quarry lateral extension and erection of new saw shed without compliance with Conditions 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 34, 37, 38, 39, 41, 46, 47, 52 and 57 of planning permission ref. P2010/0026 dated 18 August 2011 to allow for an extension to the time period for the development, revisions to the Working and Restoration Programme, an updated Drainage and Surface Water Management Plan, a wider product range for sale and export and greater flexibility in the Heavy Goods Vehicles serving the Site.



6.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 The proposed description of development is for the continuation of:

proposed restoration, quarry lateral extension and erection of new saw shed without compliance with conditions 2 and 52 of planning permission ref. P2023/0861 dated 4 March 2025 to allow for a change to the location of the new saw shed, within the established quarry buildings and plant area.

Context of Proposed Development

- 6.2 NPT granted planning permission for the erection of a new saw shed in the 2011 consent. The principle of development of the new saw shed and need for it is, therefore, established and has been ‘carried forward’ into the most recent planning permission for Gwrhyd Quarry (March 2025 consent).
- 6.3 As set out at the time of the 2011 consent, the purpose of the new saw shed with state-of-the-art sawing machinery was to broaden the range of Pennant stone products from the quarry. This remains the case.
- 6.4 The currently approved location, dimensions and external appearance of the saw shed are as described in Condition 52 and illustrated on the approved plans listed under Condition 2 of the March 2025 permission.
- 6.5 The extant planning permission allows for the erection of the saw shed in the south-west of the quarry buildings and plant area. However, this is closest to the nearest residential property.
- 6.6 Operationally, the optimal location for the shed is in the north-east of the buildings and plant complex, where the shed would also be more accessible in the context of the overall quarry operations.
- 6.7 Gwrhyd Quarry would continue to be operated in accordance with all other Conditions attached to the March 2025 planning permission including hours of operation, noise thresholds and HGV movement limits.

Proposed Changes to Planning Condition

6.8 Table 2 below sets out the proposed changes to Condition 2 of the March 2025 consent. Deleted text is ~~struckthrough~~ and new text is underlined.

Condition 2 – List of Approved Plans

6.9 It is proposed to replace the Drawings for the approved saw shed as set out in the second column of Table 2 below.

Table 2- Condition 2 – List of Approved Plans	
2025 Consent Planning Condition	Proposed Wording
The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and drawings.	The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and drawings.

a) A1.2 (Revised) Planning Application Area, October 2023 b) 170-01-1a: Phase 1a Current Extraction, October 2023 c) 170-01-1b: Phase 1b Extraction, October 2023 d) 170-01-2: Phase 2 Extraction, October 2023 e) 170-01-3: Phase 3 Extraction, October 2023 f) 170-01-Rest: Proposed Restoration Concept Plan, October 2023 g) Development Cross Sections, August 2023 h) A16067: Layout of Proposed Saw Shed i) A16068: Planning Drawing Showing Proposed Saw Shed.	a) A1.2 (Rev <u>B</u>) Planning Application Area, ~~October~~ <u>August 2023</u> b) 170-01-1a: Phase 1a Current Extraction, October 2023 c) 170-01-1b: Phase 1b Extraction, October 2023 d) 170-01-2: Phase 2 Extraction, October 2023 e) 170-01-3: Phase 3 Extraction, October 2023 f) 170-01-Rest: Proposed Restoration Concept Plan, October 2023 g) Development Cross Sections, August 2023 h) <u>A100: Proposed Site Layout of Saw Shed, July 2025</u> i) <u>A101: Proposed Plans of Saw Shed, July 2025</u> j) <u>A102: Proposed Elevations of Saw Shed, July 2025</u> k) <u>A103: Ground Sections of Saw Shed, July 2025</u> ~~l) A16067: Layout of Proposed Saw Shed~~ ~~m) A16068: Planning Drawing Showing Proposed Saw Shed~~
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Overview of Proposed Development

- 6.10 As set out in the 2011 consent, the purpose of the new saw shed is to provide a facility with modern capabilities for the processing of the quarried stone.
- 6.11 Doubling the number of saws and increasing efficiency would enable annual production capacity of dimensional stone products to be increased from approximately 4,000m² to 10,000m². Once operational, the saw shed would be a stone processing centre, improving the Applicant's capability to provide high quality masonry products for the lifetime of the quarry.
- 6.12 The existing main production shed² would be retained and used to expand the current cropping operations. This would generate a 20% increase in Artisan's capability to produce cropped walling stone by creating space for an additional cropping machine within the shed and moving an existing cropper from outside the building into the shed.
- 6.13 Artisan's proposals would enable their sawing activities which are, in the main, undertaken outside to be re-located within the confines of the fully enclosed and covered shed. This would enable easier maintenance, reduce environmental impact, improve resilience in the sawing operations and provide additional health and safety benefit by separating cropping and sawing operations.
- 6.14 As detailed in Table 3, the proposed shed would be smaller than the currently approved building and would be constructed into the bank, below current ground levels.

² As shown as B9 on Drawing J0054597-22-05a, dated 25 July 2022 of PP ref. P2022/0791

Table 3 – Approved and Proposed Saw Shed Dimensions

	Approved	Proposed
Building Footprint	1760m ²	662.8m ²
Max Length	82.8m	54.2m
Max Width	31.3m	20.3m
Max Height to Roof Ridge	10.85m	8.488m

- 6.15 The smaller building size and noise-attenuating construction materials to be used would combine to limit the impact of this modern, insulated shed and the activities to be undertaken within it. This should eliminate any noise-related concerns from nearby neighbours, whilst also protecting the machinery and employees from external elements.
- 6.16 In its proposed location, the new shed would be situated on an approximately northeast to south southwest alignment and would be built into the bank with part of the construction being a retaining wall, up to 5m below current ground level, so that it would sit at the same level as the existing main production shed to the south. This location and orientation would provide a low-level profile west elevation with the agricultural land adjacent to the quarry providing a visual barrier from Gwrhyd Road, and southeast elevation. Application Plans ref. A100, A102 and 103 provide the site location of the saw shed and elevations and ground sections in relation to current ground levels.
- 6.17 The saw shed cladding would be dark green, as per existing buildings on site, to aid assimilation into the landscape context (see Application Plan A102 – Proposed Elevations).
- 6.18 A stocking area would be located to the north of the new saw shed for the placement of freshly quarried stone ready for processing. The existing saws would be relocated within the new saw shed to provide a stocking area for ‘scants’ and work in progress to the south of it.
- 6.19 The type of plant within the shed would be consistent with the plant proposed in the 2011 consent. The facility would be capable of processing the largest blocks to give them a ‘primary’ cut. The secondary saws would enable the next step to scant (cut to size) the prepared blocks. The scants would be moved to the finishing saws to create a high-quality masonry product which could be finished with Artisan’s classic “flamed” texture using a flaming machine.

Layout of Saw Shed

- 6.20 The shed comprises three sections as illustrated on the Proposed Layout Plan A101 and described below.

Primary Saw Area

- 6.21 This main section of the new saw shed, containing most of the sawing equipment, would be approximately 34m long, 10m deep and 6.6m high. The shed would have 5 doors for vehicular access. Each saw would be located inside a dedicated insulated metal roller shutter door which would be closed while the saws are in operation to provide excellent noise dampening.
- 6.22 This Primary Saw Area would house 2No. 2500mm Jumbo Saws and 2No. 2200mm Fixed Bridge Saws and one single Primary Wire saw.

- 6.23 The Jumbo Saws would be accessed from the eastern side of the shed. One Bridge Saw would be accessed from either side on the western/eastern shed elevation. The Wire Saw would be accessed from the northern side of the shed.

Finishing Shed

- 6.24 The Finishing Shed would be at the southern end and would be approximately 13m long, 20m deep and 6.6m high.
- 6.25 This space would house 2No. Table Saws to create the finished products, one Table CNC machine which would increase capabilities of products sent to market, and one automatic 1600 Saw with a turntable, to allow for smaller block and larger masonry projects to be completed.

Water Treatment Plant

- 6.26 The existing main production saw shed relies on tanks and a flocculant to settle the sediment out of the water. An overflow feeds into a water settlement lagoon system which discharges the clean water (in compliance with license conditions) into a local watercourse.
- 6.27 The proposed water treatment plant to be housed at the southern end of the proposed new saw shed would include a filter press machine to extract the sediment from the wastewater. The proposed new system would be totally enclosed, substantially reduce the area needed for water treatment and avoid any need to discharge into the watercourse.
- 6.28 The water would be collected from the saws and the sediment extracted and pressed into a dry product. The water would be recycled and used in the dust suppression and blade cooling systems on the saws. Currently, the drystone dust powder is used as a soil forming material for restoration and Artisan are looking into alternative future uses for this powder as a potential additive or saleable material.

Operation

- 6.29 Stone quarried from the face in the form of blockstone of varying size ranging between 3 to 15 tonnes (t) would be transferred to the saw shed by Manitou forklift/telehandler.
- 6.30 A range of new and existing sawing equipment would be housed in the new saw shed, as illustrated on the Proposed Layout Plan A101 and described below.

Primary Wire Saw

- 6.31 The Primary Saw would be used for the first step in the process of creating dimensional stone. Blockstone up to 16t would be given a primary cut on the wire saw to create one flat side so that the stone can sit on the bed of the jumbo saws or other bridge saws.

Jumbo Saws

- 6.32 The Jumbo Saws would be primarily used to scant masonry grade blockstone prior to producing the finished masonry products.

Fixed Bridge Saw

- 6.33 The Fixed Bridge Saw would be primarily used for producing masonry scants, or for cropped walling products.

1600 Saw

- 6.34 The 1600 Saw is primarily used to produce kerbs and other larger dimensional stone projects. The larger blade requires fewer passes to cut through the material so speeding up the production process. This equipment also has a secondary use for producing cropping stone from smaller secondary grade masonry blocks.

Table Saws

- 6.35 A Table Saw has a 500mm blade that does the final cutting work, turning scants into finished masonry products.

CNC Table Saw

- 6.36 A CNC Table has a flexible head enabling a wider range of products, which are currently outsourced, to be produced directly on site, reducing transport requirements and environmental impacts.

7.0 CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 Gwrhyd Quarry is an active, established quarry with safeguarded reserves of Blue Pennant Sandstone, processing areas for the cutting and dressing of the stone and restored areas that sit within peripheral agricultural land.
- 7.2 The uniquely coloured, high-quality Pennant Sandstone has generated sustained demand and use of the quarry materials across the built environment from paving and walling to the construction, maintenance and renovation of new homes and iconic Welsh buildings and spaces such as Swansea Arena. Elsewhere, in non-masonry markets, Pennant Sandstone is extracted as “high PSV” (polished stone value) aggregate for its use in high specification road surfacing due to its skid resistance and hard-wearing properties.
- 7.3 The need for the new saw shed is already established and it is not necessary to rehearse the planning policy justifications which were comprehensively covered and accepted by the mineral planning authority at the time of the March 2025 consent.
- 7.4 However, it is worth noting again in this application how this established quarry contributes to economic and social objectives and provides ongoing direct and indirect employment opportunities for local communities as well as the retention and development of specialist trade skills, in particular related to the masonry and blockstone business. These attributes are key to the Welsh Government ‘prosperous’ and ‘resilient’ well-being goals which seek the efficient and proportionate use of resources and development of a skilled population in a resilient economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities.

7.5 Planning Policy Wales: Edition 12 (PPW12) acknowledges³ that:

Construction related minerals and mineral products are particularly important in Wales and are essential for housing and infrastructure... and a steady and adequate supply of materials is necessary.

7.6 The Mineral Products Association (MPA) reports⁴ that the flow of essential mineral products into the economy makes the mineral products and quarrying industry the UK's biggest materials producer with a total of 419 million tonnes of minerals and mineral products each year. This equates to a direct contribution of £7.9 billion contribution to the UK economy and the employment of 80,000 people.

7.7 More specifically, MPA Wales⁵ sets out that the mineral products and quarrying industry is essential to the Welsh economy, the operation, development and maintenance of Welsh infrastructure, as well as the built environment and quality of life. The publication states that there are over 200 sites across Wales that produce 22 million tonnes of mineral products per annum, supporting 3,800 jobs and contributing £0.7 billion to the Welsh economy.

7.8 The MPA recognise that the dimension (building) stone sector, whilst specialist, plays a vital role within the UK construction material supply industry in ensuring that the unique local characteristics and distinctiveness of natural stone-built areas of the UK are maintained and that new housing and development has a "sense of place". In addition, there is demand from the heritage sector and from the prestige development market both at home and overseas.

While dimension stone represents a fraction of the total mineral products market, more than one million tonnes of high value stone is produced in the UK each year. Yet for too long there has been a perception amongst legislators and regulators that this represents a 'small - scale' cottage industry that only exists to supply the heritage market causing unnecessary restrictions on potential output which could stifle the development and competitiveness of British dimension stone, particularly in the face of overseas imports⁶.

7.9 Stone from Gwrhyd Quarry has been used in many high-profile building projects, with a selection of examples focussing on the use of masonry stone provided below.

Atlantic College	Walling/Paving/Masonry
Llandaff Cathedral	Walling/Paving/Masonry
Bath Abbey	Walling/Paving/Masonry
Neath Abbey	Walling/Masonry
Felindre Tin Works Regeneration	Walling/Monoliths
Cotswold Homes (100+ Houses)	Walling/Paving/Masonry
Pembroke Dock South Quay Regeneration	Walling/Masonry
Clifton Suspension Bridge	Paving/Masonry

³ PPW12, Para 5.14.1

⁴ Profile of the UK Mineral Products Industry 2023 Edition

⁵ 'Delivering for Wales: Priorities for Government, Priorities for Industry' (2021)

⁶ <https://www.mineralproducts.org/Mineral-Products/Dimension-Stone.aspx#:~:text=While%20dimension%20stone%20represents%20a,in%20the%20UK%20each%20year.>



Cwmllynfell School	Quoins/Masonry
Bargoed Bus Station	Walling/Paving
Royal National Lifeboat Institution Stations Wales and South-West	Walling/Masonry
Royal Mint Llantrisant	Walling/Masonry
Coed Darcy Housing Estate	Walling/Masonry

- 7.10 Gwrhyd Quarry has a wide customer base across Wales and into England, including the Welsh Government, NPT amongst many other local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, the Canal and River Trust, South Wales Building Preservation Trust and a multitude of national and local builders merchants amongst many others.
- 7.11 At a local and regional level, Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry directly employs a workforce of 17 trained quarry personnel on the Gwrhyd site and 2 administrative personnel who work remotely from the Company's head office location. Of those working at Gwrhyd, 11 live within a 6-mile radius of the quarry while the remaining 7 operatives live within a 20-mile radius.
- 7.12 The Company relies upon a range of suppliers for engineering and supply services, of which approximately 122 companies are based in South Wales.
- 7.13 The combined wage bill at the quarry and expenditure on contractors and suppliers, the majority of whom are based in South Wales, averages over £900,000 per annum. Business rates payable to NPT average £5,500 per annum.
- 7.14 Gwrhyd Quarry therefore directly and indirectly injects just over £0.9 million per annum into the local economy.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This planning application has been prepared on behalf of Artisan Stone Supplies Limited further to preapplication discussions and advice from the mineral planning authority.
- 8.2 It seeks one change to the most recent planning permission ref. P2023/0861 (March 2025 consent); Gwrhyd Quarry already has approval for a new saw shed but the approved location would be sub-optimal in relation to nearby residential property and the wider quarry activities. Therefore, the Applicant is seeking to erect the shed more appropriately within the existing building and plant area.
- 8.3 The proposed shed would cover less than half the footprint of that of the previously approved building, be sensitively constructed within the existing topography and dark green in colour, in accordance with the requirements of the current permission. It would be clad with insulated steel, and the roller shutter doors would remain closed when saws are in use and permitted operational noise limits would remain in place and be adhered to.
- 8.4 This state-of-the-art facility with the latest modern technology would enable the Applicant to increase production and improve operational efficiency in an environmentally beneficial way.



APPENDIX 1

PLANNING APPLICATION FORM AND CERTIFICATES



APPENDIX 2

APPLICATION PLANS

APPENDIX 3

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

National Planning Policy

1. Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12⁷ (PPW12) requires a green infrastructure statement (GiS) to be submitted with all planning applications.
2. Paragraphs 6.2.12 to 6.2.13 set out that the statement should be

proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal

and that

there are multiple ways of incorporating green infrastructure, depending on the needs and opportunities a site presents.

3. The 'stepwise approach' to assessing impacts on habitats and species has been followed in accordance with Chapter 6 of PPW12.

Gwrhyd Quarry

4. Gwrhyd Quarry occupies an area of approximately 9.2 hectares (ha) and is approximately centred on National Grid Reference SN737089. The Gwrhyd Quarry landholding extends to approximately 29.3ha and includes agricultural land around the periphery of the quarry.
5. The site is within a rural area comprising agricultural land and common land for grazing.
6. Access is via a gravel surfaced track from the Gwrhyd Road, some 4 miles north of Pontardawe and approximately 3.6km to the south-west of the village of Cwmllynfell.

Proposed Development

7. There is extant planning permission for the construction of a saw shed at Gwrhyd Quarry. The approved location is sub-optimal in relation to nearby residential property and the wider quarry activities. Therefore, it is proposed to erect the shed in the north-east of the buildings and plant complex, where the shed would also be more accessible in the context of the overall quarry operations.
8. The proposed shed would be smaller than the currently approved building covering an area of approximately 662m² and constructed into the existing bank, below current ground levels, so that it would be situated at the same level as the existing main production shed to the south. The smaller building size and noise-attenuating materials to be used would combine to limit the impact of the modern, insulated shed and the activities to be undertaken within it.
9. The proposed location of the shed is shown on Plan reference (ref.) A1.2 (Rev B) – Planning Application

⁷ Welsh Government, February 2024
<https://www.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales>

Area, August 2025.

Baseline

10. Paragraph 6.2.13 of PPW 12 says

in most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans...

11. Original approval for a new saw shed at Gwrhyd Quarry was granted by the mineral planning authority in 2011 in addition to a lateral extension to the quarry. Since then, several permissions have been granted relating to the discharge of planning conditions and the quarry buildings and plant complex area.
12. The 2010 application was accompanied by a comprehensive Environmental Statement which included the results of ecological appraisal and assessment. Advance woodland and hedgerow planting was implemented following the grant of planning permission and artificial nesting boxes were installed in accordance with the requirement of a condition attached to that permission (2011 consent).
13. The most recent planning approval for the quarry planning permission reference (PP ref.) P2023/0861 was granted in March this year (2025 consent). The quarry must operate in accordance with 52 planning conditions which regulate working hours and noise limits as well as the phased working and restoration of the site and future aftercare obligations.
14. The proposed new location for the saw shed would occupy disturbed ground within the active quarry buildings and plant complex area and no statutory or non-statutory ecological designations would be directly or indirectly affected by it.
15. Attached to the 2025 consent are several conditions relevant to the provision of green infrastructure and biodiversity protection and enhancement, including those listed below.

Artificial nesting boxes

16. Condition 41 requires measures set out in the scheme for 'artificial nesting sites' approved under PP ref P2011/0861 to be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development, including restoration and aftercare. Any nesting boxes that fall into disrepair or are no longer able to perform their function must be replaced with boxes of similar specifications.

Management of soil storage mounds

17. Condition 48 requires that all vegetation growing on soil storage bunds and their margins within the site are to be maintained by cutting at least once during the growing season. All noxious weed growth must be controlled by cutting or herbicide spraying to prevent weed seed contamination of the soil resource on site or on surrounding land.

Water Management

18. Condition 33 requires the site to be operated in accordance with the approved Drainage and Surface Water Management Plan, dated October 2023 and Method Statement, dated July 2024 which were updated as part of the planning application.

Ditches and Watercourses

19. Condition 36 requires ditches and water courses passing through the site to be protected and supported to ensure that there is no pollution.

Restoration

20. The concept proposals were reviewed and updated as part of the most recent planning application. Restoration of the quarry is to be undertaken in accordance with the principles shown on the approved Restoration Concept Plan: 17-01-Rest: Proposed Restoration Concept Plan, October 2023 to ensure adequate reclamation of the site and that biodiversity objectives are met.
21. As described in the 'Revised Working and Restoration Programme' which was approved by the 2025 consent, the proposed afteruse of the quarry area and restored grass slopes will be for agricultural pasture, returning the site to its original use. Tree planting will be undertaken around retained lagoons which form part of the existing drainage system and lower areas within the quarry are proposed for ephemeral seasonal wetland. Woodland/scrub planting will provide bank stability along the slopes around the lower areas, as well as additional biodiversity value and local landscape character benefits in keeping with the pockets of woodland and treed hedgerows to the south and east of the site. The woodland pockets are shown on the northern slopes to avoid shading the lower ephemeral grasslands.
22. Condition 6 of the permission stipulates that closer to the end date of the current permission, a detailed restoration scheme for the whole site is to be submitted to the planning authority for approval. This will provide details such as the distribution of woodlands and nature conservation features.

Aftercare and Management

23. Planning condition 8 makes provision for aftercare and management arrangements for the quarry. It requires that closer to the end date of the current permission details of an aftercare scheme must be submitted to the planning authority for approval. This will provide details such as the timing and pattern of vegetation establishment and habitat aftercare and management practices and regimes.
24. Planning Condition 9 requires the site operator to arrange a formal review once a year to consider the restoration and aftercare operations which have taken place on the site during the previous year and the programme of management for the following year.

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Proposals

25. The proposed relocation of the saw shed would not directly or indirectly affect any statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites and would be on land within the active quarry buildings and plant complex.
26. The proposed location for the shed is part of Gwrhyd Quarry for which a comprehensive set of conditions is in place to regulate operations and provide for green infrastructure and ecological enhancement as part of mitigation, restoration, enhancement and aftercare obligations.
27. Therefore, it is considered that new and enhanced hedgerow planting along the southwest boundary of the Gwrhyd Quarry landholding to provide additional green infrastructure and secure a net benefit for biodiversity would be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed new saw shed. The planting would strengthen the green corridor infrastructure for greater horseshoe bats which are known to be present in the area providing foraging, commuting routes, shelter and habitat for their insect prey.

Figure 1 - Indicative location for new and enhanced hedgerow planting



Map Source Google Maps 2025