

APPLICATION NO: 13/1039/10 (DB)
APPLICANT: Hanson UK
DEVELOPMENT: Improvements of Craig Yr Hesg Quarry entrance to provide two way quarry entrance and exit.
LOCATION: CRAIG YR HESG QUARRY, BERW ROAD, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 3BG
DATE REGISTERED: 18/10/2013
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Glyncoch

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASONS:

The principle of the development is considered acceptable and is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan in respect of its impact on the landscape and the nature conservation interest of the site, residential amenity and highway safety.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Consent is sought for improvements to the existing entrance to Craig Yr Hesg Quarry to provide a two way quarry entrance and exit. The existing quarry exit road would then become redundant other than for emergency use.

The improvements would involve the widening of the existing entrance, to provide a two way, 7.4m wide carriageway, replacing the retaining wall along the western side of the road by constructing a "permacrib" timber retaining wall to an average height of 4m and rising gently to a maximum height of 5.28m, tapering down to ground level at either ends, resurfacing of the entire length of the access road, installing new signage and a speed limit of 10 miles an hour, surface water drainage provision and widening the existing bell mouth entrance, realigning the kerb junction with uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities at the site entrance onto the B4273 Ynysyawl Road. The existing safety barrier would be extended and a new 2.0 m high timber acoustic fence installed along the eastern side of the road to the rear of the residential properties in Rogart Terrace, to link into the northern edge of the proposed dry stone wall. Along the edge of the southern boundary of the new improved road and at either sides of the entrance, there would be a minimum width of crushed stone laid to a width of between 1m to 1.5m.

New signage for the quarry would be recessed into new pennant stone walling to be provided either side of the improved access road, ranging in height from 1.5 to 1.8m.

The scheme incorporates mitigation measures designed to minimise the impact on the two Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), together with replacement planting and woodland management.

The works are proposed to be undertaken in four general phases, with traffic management in place. It is proposed that the works would be undertaken during

normal quarry operating hours 07:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday but during more restricted hours of 08:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays and 09:00 to 16:00 on Sundays. Furthermore, the breaking out of rock would take place between 09:00 to 16:00 Mondays to Fridays and 09:00 to 12:00 on Saturdays.

The application illustrates that the existing quarry exit road is sub-standard in terms of its horizontal and vertical alignment and gradient and vision splay with the B4273 Ynysybwyl Road. The exit road is considered to raise health and safety issues for laden heavy goods vehicles leaving the site, a situation which is exacerbated by the use of the exit also by private drivers gaining access to garages at the rear of their residential properties.

The application is accompanied by the following information:-

- Planning Application Statement
- Plans Ref CHY:AR1, 2, 3A, 4B, 5B, 6A, 7,8,9,10B,11,12 and 13
- Bat Roost Assessment,
- Revised Landscaping Scheme,
- Noise Report,
- Permacrib Retaining Wall – Design Calculations

SITE APPRAISAL

The application site relates to the existing quarry entrance road for Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, located some 1km north of the built up area of Pontypridd, off the B4273 Ynysybwyl Road. It lies to the south of the processing operations and office facilities of the quarry and immediately adjacent to the rear of numbers 1-6 Rogart Terrace.

The current access arrangement utilises a one way system. The existing quarry exit onto the B4273 lies some 450m to the north of the quarry entrance at a point between the residential property known as “Sharon” and the Diamond Auto Repairs Garage”.

The application site measures 0.369 hectares and incorporates land taken up by the entrance road from the public highway, the B4273 Ynysybwyl Road up to the quarry gates and land either side of the road.

The land either side of the entrance road is located within two TPO's, TPO 329 located above the existing retaining wall and TPO 330 located below the road. The site is also located within a Special Landscape Area (SLA) known as Cwm Clydach. In addition, the site abuts a Site of Importance for nature Conservation (SINC 77) as defined in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

The nearest residential properties to the site are located at numbers 1-6 Rogart Terrace.

Most Relevant PLANNING HISTORY

13/0825	Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, Berw Road, Pontypridd	Erection of an asphalt plant within Class B, Part 19 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General	Granted 18.11.13
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		Permitted Development) Order 1995.	
12/0985	Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, Berw Road, Pontypridd	Trees and shrubs to be coppiced and pruned to allow site investigation works	Approved with conditions 22/11/12
12/0372	Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, Berw Road, Pontypridd	Trees and shrubs (labelled on plan C10-0086) to be felled to ground level, in roughly 5m. Wide strip up through steep wooded bank.	Approved with conditions 13/07/12
08/1380	Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, Berw Road, Pontypridd	Application for determination of conditions for mineral site. The Environmental Act 1995 (Section 96 and paragraph 9 of schedule 13).	Approved 24/04/13
99/2567	Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, Berw Road, Pontypridd	GPDO - Proposal to replace part of existing dry stone processing plant.	Raise no objection 06/09/99

STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

Transportation Section – raises no highway objection subject to conditions.

Countryside - no relevant Sewbrec records of statutory protected species from immediate vicinity. No objections raised to the proposed tree removal and revised landscaping scheme, subject to conditions regarding bat avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures in accordance with the submitted Bat Assessment Report.

Land Reclamation and Engineering - raises no objections and advises of drainage conditions.

Natural Resources Wales – raises no adverse comments .

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by site notices and neighbourhood notification. One letter, signed by three residents has been received as a result of this publicity raising the following comments:-

- There is a cheaper and easier engineering option which would be far less disruptive,
- There would be additional heavy traffic using the access and the Darren Park storage area with the recently granted asphalt plant permitted to operate at night time and at weekends,
- Engineering construction inadequate to cater for articulated lorries of up to 45 tonnes in terms of engineering and public safety,
- The construction of the existing crash barrier is considered inadequate,

- Question the suitability of the permacrib retaining wall, its mass concrete foundation, ground profile above and engineering details should be provided.
- Question how bank will be retained prior to backfilling,
- Soil and groundwater conditions not independently determined,
- Consider need for another drainage channel/French drain at front of retaining wall,
- Profile of road is not constant: it is steeper at the top and not an even grade as shown on submitted drawings,
- Question safety of traffic management proposals particularly during phases 2 and 3,
- Consider weekend and out of hours working for rock removal to be unnecessary,
- Storm water drain could be contaminated with dust , grit and bitumen based oil,
- The proposals do not include wheel wash facilities for heavy trucks leaving the site, nor dust controls along the new road,
- Consider works should be independently supervised to ensure the works comply with current construction standards and for the safety of residents,
- Consider that the revised access is proposed in order to cater for the large articulated 45 tonne trucks rather than for health and safety or environmental concerns.

PLANNING POLICY

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP)

The Proposal and Constraint Maps show that the site lies in the countryside, within a Special Landscape Area,(SLA) known as Cwm Clydach, within a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation SINC 77 (Craig Y r Hesg /Lan Wood), within an area identified for sandstone resources and within the 200 metre buffer zone of Craig Yr Hesg Quarry sandstone resource. The site lies adjacent to the Craig Yr Hesg Local Nature Reserve and adjacent to the Glyncoch Quarry Regionally Important Geological Site.

Policy CS2 - seeks to achieve sustainable development within the southern strategy area by a number of means including protecting the natural environment.

Policy AW5 - supports development where amenity criteria are met, including a) the scale, form and design would have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, b) existing site features of the built and natural environment would be retained, and c) there would be no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers; and accessibility criteria are met including the development would have safe access to the highway network.

Policy AW6 – supports development with a high standard of design where (2) they are appropriate to the local context, (7) landscaping and planting are integral to the scheme and enhance the site and the wider context, (14) the design protects and enhances the landscape and biodiversity, and (16) the design promotes good water management.

Policy AW8 – only permits development proposals where they would not cause harm to features of a Site of Importance to Nature Conservation, subject to criteria

and there would be no unacceptable impact upon features of importance to landscape and the quality of natural resources such as water, soil and the natural drainage of surface water.

Policy AW10 – does not permit development proposals where they would cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health and/or local amenity due to (6) land stability, (7) water pollution, (8) flooding.

Policy AW14 – safeguards sandstone resources from any development which would sterilise or hinder their extraction.

Policy NSA23 – requires development within Special Landscape Areas to conform to the highest standards of design, siting, layout and materials appropriate to the character of the area.

National Guidance

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of National Planning Policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where National Planning Policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Chapter 3 (Making and enforcing Decisions), Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability), Chapter 5 (Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast), Chapter 7 (Economic Development), Chapter 12 (Infrastructure and Services) and Chapter 13 (Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution) set out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application.

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

Principle of the proposed development

The application site is located outside the settlement boundary and is located within the area of sandstone resources, as defined in the LDP. The land forming the subject of this application falls either side of the existing entrance road to Craig Yr Hesg Quarry and immediately adjacent to the current mineral permission. The proposed development would provide an improvement to the existing access at the quarry. It is therefore considered that the development is acceptable in principle.

Main Issues:

It is considered that the main considerations in the determination of the application are the impact on the landscape and nature conservation interests, the impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties and highway safety.

Landscape

The application site lies within the Cwm Clydach SLA where LDP Policy NSA 23 – requires development to conform to the highest standards of design, siting, layout and materials appropriate to the character of the area. In addition, within the Cwm Clydach SLA one of the key management objectives is to manage and conserve the wooded slopes of the Taff Vale which are considered to be important in views from the A470 corridor, and which form a backdrop above Pontypridd, as well as partially screening the quarry. The proposed works would also be contained within TPO Areas known as No's. 329 and 330 which reinforces the woodlands as having natural heritage value, which contribute to the character and amenity of the locality.

In respect of these matters, it is considered that the proposed works would form a narrow corridor within the substantial area of the SLA designation. The works would be well related to the existing quarry area, distant views of which would be well below the skyline and contained to limited vantage points obscured by vegetation mainly from across the valley in Pontypridd, Cilfynydd and along the A470 corridor. Closer and lower viewpoints would be available from the B4273 Ynysybwll Road.

Whilst the widening of the site entrance would necessitate the removal of some 21 trees, the majority of which would be sycamore and birch trees and a replacement planting and management scheme is proposed. The large retaining feature, up to 5m in height, would be a wooden crib structure which would allow trailing and climbing plants to develop within the structure. The works also involve the creation of an enhanced quarry entrance feature with the provision of new dry stone walls and new signage recessed into the walls, which is illustrated by a photomontage on Plan Ref CHY/AR12.

Overall, it is considered that the loss of trees has been minimised to enable the highway improvements, and the new features would be sympathetic to the adjoining woodland and the SLA, in terms of their design and external appearance and would be appropriate to the character of the area and would not form a prominent feature within existing views of the quarry. As such it is considered that the proposed works would comply with Policies AW5, AW6 and NSA23 of the LDP.

Nature Conservation

The proposed works would result in the loss of trees but the submitted landscaping scheme includes a replanting scheme which reflects the number, location and existing species within the existing woodland, located within the TPO's and SINC designations and are of a size to allow natural regeneration. The planting of hazel and blackthorn are also proposed in order to continue the development of natural regenerating flora beneath the tree canopy. No additional planting is considered necessary on the steep embankment above Rogart Terrace as re-planting might disturb the area rather than be of benefit.

A bat assessment accompanies the application. It has concluded that none of the trees to be removed have a high potential to support bats, but three trees have a low potential. A number of mitigation measures are proposed including the use of the careful felling of some trees, felling between late October to February in order to also avoid the bird nesting period, and the provision of at least 4 bat boxes installed on retained trees facing in different directions.

The Council's Countryside Section have raised no objections to the proposals subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure that the above measures are implemented as proposed. As such it is considered that the proposed works would comply with Policy AW8 of the LDP.

Residential amenity

As the site is situated in close proximity to a number of residential properties there is the potential for the additional traffic associated with the road improvement proposal and the construction activities to have an impact on the residential amenity of these properties, in terms of additional noise, dust and disturbance, and concerns have been received from local residents regarding these matters. There is also the potential for the works to have an effect on the enjoyment of users of the nearby local nature reserve.

The proposed operating hours for engineering and construction works are proposed to be the same as the normal quarry operating hours, 7am to 7pm during week day and more restricted hours during the weekend periods. However it is considered that the standard hours of construction (i.e. Mon to Fri 8am to 6pm and 8am to 1pm Sat) should be applied to the proposed works in order to ensure that the noise and disturbance is not a source of nuisance to the nearby residential properties.

An acoustic report accompanies the application. This was requested in order to ensure that the specifications and siting of the proposed 2m high acoustic fence adjacent to the rear of Rogart Terrace would be appropriate to mitigate the noise disturbance from the additional vehicles accessing and exiting the site, along the new road. The acoustic report has concluded that the proposed acoustic fence would provide an attenuation of noise up to 5dB L_{AEQ}, whereas the additional noise expected from doubling the number of heavy good vehicle (hgv) movements along the new road would increase noise levels by 3dB L_{AEQ}. The Report therefore states that the acoustic fence more than off sets the increase in expected noise levels. The Council's Public Health and Protection Division have assessed the report and considered it acceptable subject to conditions to secure the installation of the acoustic fence in accordance with the submitted details and subject to a maintenance condition.

The proposals also have the potential to create additional dust and therefore conditions are recommended to secure a dust minimisation scheme in respect of the construction activities including the use of wheel washing facilities. Furthermore, the new quarry road would necessitate the re-siting of the existing wheel wash, which is currently located along the quarry exit road. It is therefore considered appropriate to impose a pre commencement condition to require the relocation and use of wheel wash facilities prior to beneficial use of the new road.

It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme would comply with national and local planning policies in respect of its impact on the amenities of nearby residents and recreational users.

Highway safety

Highway safety issues would extend to whether the provision of the improved access to the site from the existing highway network and whether the construction operations would be acceptable.

It is recognised that the existing exit from the quarry is severely less than standard in terms of the available vision splays and in terms of its horizontal and vertical alignment. These matters are exacerbated in terms of the slow moving and heavily laden hgv traffic exiting the quarry and the poor road surface conditions especially during periods of inclement weather.

The proposal would provide a new two way access road in the form of a priority junction to enable hgv traffic to enter and leave the site in a forward gear and provides for a vision splay of 120m x 2.4m which would comply with the standard required for the 40mph speed limit of the B4273.

The Council's Transportation Section has advised that the proposal provides for improved access for the site particularly by heavily laden hgv's when compared to the existing sub-standard arrangement. Therefore, on this basis the proposal is considered acceptable subject to the imposition of recommended appropriate conditions in order to secure full engineering designs, permanent retention of the vision splay, surface water drainage details and details of traffic management and wheel washing facilities during the construction period. A condition is also recommended in order to improve the surface course fronting the site access in view of the potential wearing of the highway fronting the site by the heavily laden hgv traffic generated by the quarry activities which would create excessive maintenance liability to the Highway Authority.

OTHER ISSUES

The following other material considerations have been taken into account in considering the application, though were not the key determining factors in reaching the recommendation:

Structural stability

Structural design calculations have been submitted in respect of the proposed Permacrib Retaining wall to ensure that it would be constructed in accordance with the relevant standards. The Council's Structural Engineer has considered the report and has advised that it is acceptable. subject to a condition to secure its construction in accordance with the approved details. It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme complies with national and local planning policies in respect of its impact on stability matters.

Surface water drainage and flooding issues

The proposal includes the provision of a surface water drainage system which has been designed in accordance with Design Manual for Roads & Bridges, as modified by the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council standard requirements. The proposals include a perforated land drain at the top and bottom of the proposed timber crib retaining wall, feeding into the existing surface water drainage system.

The Council's Drainage Officer has considered the proposal and has raised no objections subject to conditions to secure full drainage details, in order to prevent flooding and the pollution of the water environment.

It is therefore considered that, subject to the imposition of conditions as recommended above, the proposed scheme complies with national and local planning policies in respect of its impact on surface water drainage and flooding issues.

Other Matters raised by Members of the public

- The consideration of alternative options for the access to the quarry is not relevant to the planning consideration of the application. The justification for the revised access arrangement is considered acceptable in view of the sub standard nature of the existing exit road,
- The engineering construction of the road, the nature of the crash barrier and traffic management during construction would be subject to the requirements of the details required by the conditions recommended to be imposed by the Transportation Section,
- The independent supervision of the engineering works is not the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The LPA's role is to ensure that the engineering details of the development are acceptable and impose conditions to secure that the development complies with the approved details. It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure that the development is built in accordance with the approved details.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in principle and comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan in respect of its impact on the landscape character and nature conservation interest of the site, residential amenity and highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with

the submitted plans nos. CHY:AR1, 2, 3A, 4B, 5B, 6A 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. The permacrib retaining wall and the acoustic fence hereby approved shall be completed prior to beneficial use of the improved road hereby approved and shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted reports and details. The approved acoustic fencing shall thereafter be retained in perpetuity in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and submitted technical reports and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

4. All planting, seeding or turfing in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the beneficial use or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity in accordance with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. Before any work is commenced on site, including site works of any description, each of the trees to be retained shall be securely fenced off by a chestnut paling or similar fence erected in a circle round each tree to coincide with the extremity of the canopy of the tree. Within the areas so fenced off the existing ground level shall be neither raised nor lowered, and no materials or temporary buildings or surplus soil of any kind shall be placed or stored thereon during the period of construction works. If any trenches for services are required in the fenced-off areas during construction works they shall be excavated and back-filled by hand and any tree roots encountered with a diameter of 5cms or more shall be left unsevered.

Reason: To protect the existing trees on the site during the course of building work in the interests of amenity in accordance with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. The development shall be completed in accordance with the details of Bat avoidance mitigation and enhancement measures set out in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the submitted Bat Roost Assessment Report dated October 2013. All replacement bat boxes shall be provided prior to the commencement of any tree felling, and maintained as such thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest nature conservation in accordance with policies AW5 and AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

7. Building operations shall not be commenced until samples of the materials proposed to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all materials used shall conform to the sample(s) so approved.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area and adjoining buildings in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

8. Construction works on the development shall not take place other than during the following times:
- i) Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800 hours;
 - ii) Saturday 0800 to 1300 hours;
 - iii) Not at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the noise emitted from this development is not a source of nuisance to occupants of nearby residential properties in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

9. No development shall take place until drainage arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate disposal of found and surface water drainage in accordance with policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

10. The road hereby approved shall be not occupied until the drainage works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure adequate disposal of foul and surface water drainage in accordance with policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

11. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, no works shall commence on site until full engineering design and details of the tie in of the proposed means of access together with the improvements to the surface course of the B4273 Ynysyawl Road fronting the site access have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details prior to beneficial use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

12. The vehicular access to the site hereby approved shall be laid out, constructed and retained thereafter with 2.4m x 120 metre vision splays.

Reason: To give better visibility in the interests of road safety to vehicles emerging on to the highway in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

13. No obstruction or planting when mature, exceeding 0.9 metre in height shall be placed within the required vision splay areas.

Reason: To give better visibility in the interests of road safety to vehicles emerging on to the highway in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

14. No development shall take place, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for;

- a) The means of access into the site for all construction traffic.
- b) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- c) The management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- d) Loading and unloading of plant materials.
- e) Wheel wash facilities and dust minimisation measures.
- f) The sheeting of lorries leaving the site.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction process unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and road safety in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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