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County Planning, Minerals and Waste
Cambridgeshire County Council
New Shire Hall
Emery Crescent, Enterprise Campus
Alconbury Weald
PE28 4YE

6th April, 2023

NP-22/168
BY PLANNING PORTAL

Dear Sir or Madam,

APPLICATION UNDER SECTION 73 OF THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT (AS AMENDED)

MINOR MATERIAL AMENDMENT FOR THE DELETION OF CONDITION 7 AND AFFIXING OF A NEW CONDITION 7 TO PLANNING APPROVAL FMW/080/19

STATION QUARRY, STATION ROAD, STEEPLE MORDEN, SG7 5RT

This letter has been prepared by Iceni Projects on behalf of our client, B.P. Mitchell, requesting a minor amendment under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) to Planning Approval FMW/080/19. The amendment effectively seeks to alter the wording of Condition 7 relating to the transportation of extracted material between Station Quarry and Plantation Quarry. Existing Condition 7 states:

7. Raw Material Transportation

All mineral and mineral waste arising from Station Quarry as shown edged red on drawing number CCC/SM1 dated December 1999 and received 13 March 2000 shall be transported to Plantation Quarry only via the conveyor.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety and in accordance with policy CS24 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (July 2011) and policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan (September 2018).

B.P. Mitchell wishes to alter the wording of the condition to permit the movement of extracted material between Station Quarry and Plantation Quarry via a single haulage vehicle, in addition to the conveyor, which would operate along the private connecting road between the two quarries.

a. Why the Applicant is seeking a revised Condition 7

BP Mitchell have recently acquired the linked Station Quarry and Plantation Quarry and is seeking to commence chalk extraction in the spring of 2023, as soon as weather conditions support an efficient operation.

BP Mitchell intends to utilise chalk for a combination of betocarb production on-site, on-site concrete batching and private sale to agricultural farms. The extraction of chalk will take place both within Plantation Quarry and Station Quarry, with mineral extracted from both to be managed, stored, processed and utilised within Plantation Quarry only.

Station and Plantation Quarry are linked by a track which accommodate the existing conveyor and a single lane vehicular route which is approximately 3.35m in width. The track and existing conveyor run approximately 2260m in length and enable the transfer of mineral from Station Quarry to Plantation Quarry. This is the sole means of transporting mineral from Station Quarry, in accordance with the extant ROMP for Station Quarry.

It is important to note that efficient and productive quarrying activity is heavily dependant on dry weather conditions because the dryer the chalk is at extraction, the more energy efficient, quicker and more sustainable operation can be undertaken. In this regard, if the mineral is wet, it is heavier and needs to be dried out to utilise in production. Accordingly, BP Mitchell will extract mineral in dry periods and the operation will be seasonally dependent. Given this context, it is essential that the company is able to run a productive and efficient operation when the conditons allow.

The conveyor belt which is currently used to transport material from Station Quarry to Plantation Quarry experiences recurring maintenance issues which, due to the complex nature of the machinery, takes multiple days to identify and repair each time there is a fault. This seriously inhibits the effectiveness of the operation and the likelihood of breakdown cannot be negated through greater investment in the conveyor. The problem is a systemic one, with the previous operator having suffered numerous delays due to regular conveyor breakdown, irrespective of the investment in the machinery and maintenance.

The proposed solution is a single 30 tonne vehicle operating along the track between the quarries to transport mineral from Station Quarry to the Drying Shed within Plantation Quarry.

b. Protecting Residential Amenity and Highway Safety

The reason for the imposition of Condition 7 was “in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety”. Policies CS24 of the MWLP and HQ/1 of the LP referenced in the reason for imposition for the Conditon highlight that the design of developments should in part ensure that developments do not adversely affect local accessibility, safety, character, or amenity.

It is considered that due to the site’s distance from the nearest residential properties, which is confirmed in the Transport Note to be approximately 265 metres away at the track’s closest point, the operation of a single lorry along the track does not present an unacceptable amenity impact on residential properties. The distance from properties means there should be no impact in terms of air quality, noise, vibration or any other amenity issue upon residential amenity.

With respect to Highway Safety, there are considered to be two surmountable issues associated with the proposed change:

- 1) The operation of a single vehicle along the track; and
- 2) The interface with the Public Bridleway which crosses the track close to the entrance of Station Quarry

Appended to this letter is a Construction and Operational Management Strategy document, which provides detail on the new proposed movement of the extracted materials. This document confirms that the maximum number trips in any given day would be 20 times, or 40 two-way trips. Split over a ten-hour period, equates to 2 movements per hour.

In terms of the intersecting PRow network, the photomontage within the Transport Note indicates that limited signage exists presently, making it unclear to pedestrians as to where the PRow network goes upon reaching the crossing. Accordingly, given that the event of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles at the intersection would be rare, it is recommended that signage is introduced to ensure that caution is raised to both pedestrians and moving vehicles. In addition, the applicant would be happy to provide additional signage to increase the overall legibility of the PRow network at the crossing.

Overall, with the above measures, it is considered that the purpose of Condition 7 is preserved.

c. Proposed New Condition

The following amended wording to Condition 7 is proposed:

7. Raw Material Transportation

All mineral and mineral waste arising from Station Quarry as shown edged red on drawing number CCC/SM1 dated December 1999 and received 13 March 2000 shall be transported to Plantation Quarry via the conveyor. In the event that the conveyor is out of order and/or under repair, the transportation of material is permitted via a single lorry in accordance with the approved Operational Management Plan dated and received April 2023.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety and in accordance with policy CS24 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (July 2011) and policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan (September 2018).

d. Summary

Maintaining a good supply of usable chalk material, which reduces the need for energy consumption in the drying process through a viable and efficient minerals operation, is plainly of economic and wider societal value to the County.

The agreed arrangement for the transportation of chalk by conveyor belt at the linked Plantation and Station Quarries inhibits the ability to extract and transfer dry chalk in the all-important summer months through reliance on a single significant piece of plant equipment that regularly breaks down and prevents material being transported for days at a time.

This application seeks the removal and affixation of a replacement planning Condition which enables transfer via both a conveyor and the use of a single lorry for chalk transfer. The proposed Condition would not result in unacceptable residential amenity impact or highway safety impact through the proposed singular vehicle usage and signage and gate arrangement articulated in the attached report. The proposed change would aid efforts to run a simpler, more efficient and sustainable activity at the quarries and potential suitable replacement wording has been advanced.

We would be delighted to discuss this proposal with the County Planning Authority and to discuss amended wording should that proposed not be deemed acceptable. I trust the application can be validated and the statutory consultation process can be commenced forthwith, but please do not hesitate to contact me on 07756 196 426 or npellegram@iceniprojects.com if you have any queries regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,

N. Pellegram

Nicholas Pellegram
Assistant Planner