

**Planning Application for  
Variation of conditions 43 and 44  
Planning permission ref: S/0013/15/CW  
to allow an alternative final Restoration scheme**

**ALBORO DEVELOPMENTS Ltd**

**Gravel Diggers (Area E1), Cambridge Waste  
Management Park, Ely Road Waterbeach**

**Supporting Statement**



**CLOVER PLANNING**

Flat Road Farm,  
Willingham,  
Cambridge,  
CB24 5JW

Phone: 01954 261538

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CP/ADL/GDRR/01	Location Plan	Scale 1:5000 at A3
CP/ADL/GDRR/02	Site Plan	Scale 1:2500 at A2
CP/ADL/GDRR/03	Approved Restoration (Extract)	Scale NTS
CP/ADL/GDRR/04	Restoration Scheme	Scale 1:500 at A1

**Supporting Statement**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This application is to seek permission to amend the approved restoration profile and planting scheme following the extraction of sand and gravel and subsequent infilling of the void with clay on a 27 hectare area of land known as Gravel Diggers.

## **2.0 Site Location and Description**

- 2.1 This site is a recently worked former sand and gravel quarry located in open countryside 3.8 km north east of Cottenham. Mineral extraction was completed in 2019 and the site has subsequently been infilled with clay and restored to grassland with two water bodies. The location of the proposed development site known as Gravel Diggers, is shown on drawing number CP/ADL/GDRR/01.
- 2.2 The proposed amendment relates to the most northerly part of the 160 hectare Cambridge Waste Management Park (WMP). The WMP lies just off the A10 between Waterbeach and Chittering some 8 kilometres north of Cambridge. The WMP includes a range of waste management activities, including a mechanical and biological treatment facility and a materials recovery facility, composting, inert waste processing, aggregate storage and distribution, waste wood processing. The majority of the site has been affected by past mineral extraction and has been backfilled with waste in engineered cells and restored to grassland. Vehicular access to the A10 is via a purpose built roundabout.
- 2.3 The Gravel Diggers site extends to approximately 27 hectares situated to the north of the main WMP site (see drawing number CP/ADL/GDRR/01). The site is also referred to area E1 on various planning permissions relating to the WMP (see Drawing number CCC/CRC/2 in appendix 1). It lies to the north of Lots Drove and Engine Drain and bound by Long Drove to the west. The site is located within an edge of fen landscape, which is primarily flat, generally open and predominantly in arable use. To the west of Long Drove is a current area of mineral extraction known as Mitchell Hill.
- 2.4 The nearest settlements to the Gravel Diggers site are the hamlet of Chittering approximately 0.5 kilometres east; Cottenham around 3 kilometres southwest of the site and the villages of Landbeach and Waterbeach are over 3.5 kilometres south. The closest residential properties, including Elm Farm and Gravel Diggers Farm are situated off Long Drove some 100 metres south west of the site, and Chestnut Farm situated off Lots Drove some 25 metres south of the site.
- 2.5 The site is currently a single block of land recently dug for sand and gravel and backfilled with indigenous clay, won from elsewhere in the WMP, to create a domed profile. Soils stripped from the site prior to mineral extraction have been spread over the infill clay material and the surface cultivated and grass seeded. The restored site has been cropped for hay in 2022 and 2023. Two water bodies have been left, one at the northern end of the site and the other on the eastern side. A perimeter ditch linking the 2 water bodies has been partly constructed. There is an established hedge with trees along the western boundary with Long Drove. Recently planted (last 20 years) native trees and shrubs are now

established along the southern boundary and around the former plant site at the eastern end of the site.

- 2.6 An existing haul road runs along the south western corner of the site this connects the Mitchell Hill area of mineral extraction to the main WMP and from there to the A10 via a roundabout junction.
- 2.7 As well as being accessed via this haul road, an agricultural access using a pre-existing field gateway off Long Drove has been created along the northern boundary of the site to give access to agricultural land to the east.

### **3.0 Planning History**

- 3.1 In 2001, Cambridgeshire County Council granted planning permission (ref: S/1587/99) for a major waste management facility to serve the needs of Cambridgeshire, now known as the Cambridge WMP. The planning permission covered a number of developments including the construction of a dedicated roundabout connecting the site to the A10, a range of waste management uses that include; treatment of household and other non-hazardous waste, landfill of residual waste and remediation of old landfill together with restoration of land to agriculture & nature conservation and tree & hedge planting. The planning permission also permitted the extraction of sand, gravel and clay as well as the recovery and recycling of secondary aggregates. The planning permission has been implemented and the WMP has been developed over the last 20 years. The Gravel Diggers site was the last area of sand and gravel extraction permitted under this planning permission. Following mineral extraction, the resulting void was to be backfilled with putrescible waste to create a domed profile rising to a height of 8 m AoD. The site would subsequently be planted with hedges and an area of tree planting, the location of which broadly corresponds with the current approved restoration scheme. Condition 43 of the permission required the Gravel Diggers area to have been worked and restored by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011.
- 3.2 Since planning permission (ref S/1587/99) was granted a number of other planning permissions have been granted to vary that original permission or permit other development within the WMP. Many of those permissions are not directly relevant to the Gravel Diggers site and are thus not referred to here, however a number are. In particular, permission was granted to extend the time period for working and restoring the areas of sand and gravel extraction to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 (planning permission ref S/02279/11/CW), to amend the original approved phasing scheme (ref S/02575/12/CW) and the provision of a new aggregate processing plant to process as-raised aggregate (planning permission ref: S/02610/12/CM). These applications were accompanied by an Environmental Statement which updated, amended and replaced parts of the original Environmental Statement submitted with planning application ref S/1587/99. All 3 applications were approved in February 2014.
- 3.3 In April 2016, planning permission (ref S/0013/15/CW) was granted to amend several of the planning conditions relating to planning permissions ref S/02279/11/CW & S/02575/12/CW. In respect of the Gravel Diggers site, the changes included approving an alternative restoration using onsite sourced clay material to achieve a lower domed profile. The application was accompanied by a

further updated Environmental Statement. Conditions 43 and 44 of that permission set out the restoration requirements of the Gravel Diggers site (referred to as Area E1 in the conditions).

3.4 Condition 43 of this permission states:

*The land identified as Area 'E1' on attached Plan CCC/CRC/2 shall, by 31 December 2019, have been restored in accordance with the Landscape Restoration Drawing Reference 1550-01-19 dated November 2015.*

Landscape Restoration Drawing Reference 1550-01-19 is contained in Appendix 2. Drawing number CP/ADL/GDRR/03 is an enlarged extract of the plan focused on the Gravel Diggers (E1) area

3.5 Planning permission ref S/0013/15/CW has been the subject of several Non Material Amendments (NMA) applications not all of which are relevant to the Gravel Diggers site. However, one NMA (ref: S/0013/15/CW/N2) amended the approved phasing drawings to take account of an alternative method of clean water/silt management. Although not part of the approved restoration scheme (as shown on Landscape Restoration Drawing Reference 1550-01-19) the existing water body on the eastern side of the site is one of the lagoons approved under this amendment. A further NMA (ref S/0013/15/CW/N4) which allowed the retention of a haul road, the construction of a further temporary haul road and re-alignment of part of haul route to Gravel Diggers, further amended condition 44 to refer to two additional drawings ref WWMP\_HR\_003 and WWMP\_HR\_004. The works permitted by this more recent NMA relate to development outside the Gravel Diggers site (area E1 as defined by planning permission ref S/0013/15/CW). The development permitted by this NMA are covered by separate restoration and aftercare requirements which are not affected by the current proposals.

3.6 Condition 44, as amended, states:

*'The development carried out in Area 'E1' on attached Plan CCC/CRC/2 shall be implemented in accordance with the following details:*

- *CP/FRIM/GDF/C44a1 rev c Soil Movements Phase 1 dated Revision September 2016;*
- *CP/FRIM/GDF/C44a1a Soil Movements Phase 2a dated September 2016;*
- *CP/FRIM/GDF/C44a2 rev b Soil Movements Phase 2b dated Revision September 2016;*
- *CP/FRIM/GDF/C44a3 rev c Soil Movements Phase 3 dated Revision September 2016;*
- *CP/FRIM/GDF/C44a4 rev c Soil Movements Phase 4 dated Revision September 2016;*
- *CP/FRIM/ GDF/C44a5 rev c Soil Movements Phase 5 dated Revision September 2016;*
- *16-276-D-001 Silt Lagoon, Cross Sections Revision 01 dated Oct'16;*

- *1550-01-007 Area E1 Soil Movements Phase 6 dated November 2015;*
- *1550-01-08 Site Section dated November 2015;*
- *1550-01-09 Site Section dated November 2015;*
- *1550-01-19 Landscape Restoration Plan Rev A dated 11-3-16;*
- *1550-01-20 Phasing dated November 2015;*
- *Lots Drove Crossing 44b – Drawing No: CP/FRIM/GDF/C44b Rev A dated October 2012;*
- *Noise Barrier – Drawing No: CP/FRIM/GDF/06 dated September 2012; and*
- *Acoustic Fence – Drawing No: CP/FRIM/GDF/07 dated April 2013;*
- *WWMP\_HR\_003, Temporary Haul Road Duration of Works dated October 2018 (received 8 October 2018);*
- *WWMP\_HR\_004 Temporary Haul Road Post Works dated October 2018 (received 8 October 2018).*

#### **4.0 Proposal**

- 4.1 The proposed development is to seek approval for a revised restoration scheme for the Gravel Diggers (area E1) site.
- 4.2 The approved restoration landform is shown on drawing number 1550-01-19 (see appendix 2 and drawing number CP/ADL/GDRR/03). The site is currently required to be restored in accordance with this Plan by virtue of conditions 43 and 44 of planning permission ref S/0013/15/CW by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019. As set out above, the site has been quarried for sand and gravel and backfilled with indigenous clays extracted from elsewhere within the WMP. Infilling and initial restoration works were completed by the previous owner by mid 2020.
- 4.3 Following a change in ownership a topographical survey was undertaken in March 2021 (see appendix 3). This demonstrates that the restoration works undertaken to date have not achieved the approved landform. This planning application seeks permission for an alternative restoration landform which is primarily based on the restoration landform that has been achieved to date with some modifications (see drawing number CP/ADL/GDRR/04). Thus, instead of a shallow domed profile rising to between 6 and 7 m AoD with the highest point of the site being in the northern half of the site, the existing landform consisting of a shallow domed profile rising to a height of 5.4m AoD would be retained. The approved landform makes provision for a perimeter ditch around the infilled area, this feature has been retained from original restoration scheme for Gravel Diggers which involved a higher domed landform achieved by the importation of putrescible waste. The proposed scheme would retain the ditch created along the western boundary, this now links to a much larger water body on the northern boundary. The approved scheme only made provision for a ditch along this boundary with ponds in north eastern and north western corners.
- 4.4 The approved scheme makes provision for a ditch along the eastern side of the site. This has not been constructed in full. Instead, a ditch has been constructed parallel with the eastern boundary but approximately 25 metres into the site. This

- ditch is linked to the retained water bodies on the northern and eastern side of the site. The ditch continues south to link to the remnants of a former ditch marking a pre extraction east west field boundary. Most of the former field boundary and ditch have disappeared as a result of mineral extraction and subsequent infilling.
- 4.5 The approved restoration scheme makes provision for a continuous ditch enclosing the backfilled area, this did not include the plant site which occupied a further area of land extending east from the extraction/infill area. This ditch has not been constructed to the west of the former plant site and it is not proposed to create a ditch in this location. A very shallow channel (approx. 0.5 metres deep) has been created along the western edge of the former plant site, this does not form part of the approved restoration scheme and is not considered to achieve any meaningful function. It is proposed that this will be removed as part of the proposed restoration scheme.
- 4.6 In terms of planting, the approved scheme provides for the retention of all existing planting which includes extensive areas of screen planting carried out about 20 years ago. A new block of woodland planting on the former plant site, a block of woodland planting at the southern end of the site parallel with Lots Drove, two new hedges crossing the site from east to west reflecting the former field boundaries, new hedge planting on the eastern and northern boundaries and specimen trees adjacent to a stretch of the drainage ditch within the site. The remainder of the site is identified for grazing/biomass crop use.
- 4.7 The approved planting scheme does not fit well with the restored landform and a number of changes are proposed. The existing advance planting will be retained as before, however the tree planting on the former plant site, the hedgerows crossing the site and the hedgerow on the northern boundary are excluded from the proposed amendments. In the case of the later, the need to accommodate an agricultural access and retention of a larger water body mean there is no room within the site to provide a hedgerow on the northern boundary. As an alternative, new areas of tree and shrub planting are being proposed focusing on the area south of the northern water body, along the northern half of the eastern boundary and enhancing existing planting around the remnants of the former ditch marking a pre extraction east west field boundary. As it is no longer proposed to create the circular ditch feature in its entirety the specimen trees are also no longer being proposed.
- 4.8 Around the new water bodies marginal aquatic vegetation is proposed as a replacement for the marginal aquatic vegetation originally envisaged around the ponds forming part of the original scheme.
- 4.9 There are 3 shallow areas which are clearly not draining naturally to the west of the pond on the eastern side of the site and these are sitting wet in the winter months (see drawing CP/ADL/GDRR/04). The largest of these areas was an area of standing water in March 2021 (see Topographical Survey 9/3/21 Appendix 3). It is unclear whether this is a result of how the landform was created or subsequent uneven settlement (all three low lying areas broadly correspond with the site of a former silt lagoon). There are very limited suitable restoration materials available on site to correct these levels. It is therefore proposed to import suitable soils if available to make up levels. Given there is unlikely to be sufficient materials



readily available the focus will be on the 2 smaller low lying areas. To address the longer term drainage issues it is proposed to install agricultural drains approximately in the location indicated on drawing number CP/ADL/GDRR/04. The exact specification and location being addressed as part of the aftercare scheme for the site (see condition 49 of pp ref S/0013/15/CW) along with the need for any other agricultural drainage. The approved aftercare scheme can be found in appendix 4.

- 4.10 The remainder of the site would retained as grassland in effect as 1 block and cropped annually for hay with aftermath grazing. The grassland area was recultivated to create a seed bed and drilled with a clover rich sward in the autumn of 2022 and the sward cut for hay the summer. The aftermath will either grazed off or topped this winter.

## **5.0 The Development Plan**

- 5.1 The Development Plan comprises of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted September 2018 and the policies of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2036 adopted July 2021.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF is a material consideration to be taken into account when making planning decisions.
- 5.3 The relevant policy considerations have been taken into account in drafting this proposal and are referred to below under the relevant subject headings below.

## **6.0 Planning Policy Considerations**

- 6.1. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy 19 addresses restoration and aftercare requirements. The policy requires that all mineral extraction related proposals, and temporary waste management proposals to be accompanied by a restoration and aftercare scheme proposal. In this case there is an approved restoration and aftercare scheme in place. However the approved final landform that has been created is not in accordance with the approved scheme. The restoration landform that has been created has allowed the site to be put to a beneficial afteruse, for the majority of the site, that afteruse is the same as the approved restoration scheme. The created landform although a different profile, is lower than the approved scheme and is not considered to have any greater landscape impact than the scheme that is currently approved. The site already benefits from boundary planting which limits public views into the site particularly from the south where the nearest residential properties are located. Compared to the approved landform the existing landform does not have any additional implications in terms of the flood risk.
- 6.2. The restored landform is not considered to have any additional impacts compared with the approved scheme. It is considered that now trying to undertake substantial earthworks just to achieve the approved landform would cause substantial harm, in terms of amenity impacts, further handling of placed soils resources, loss of planting carried out to date and the delay to putting the site to a

beneficial afteruse. This harm would not be outweighed by creating the current approved landform.

- 6.3. Although the restored landform differs from the approved scheme it has still created a number new waterbodies. These have already been planted with marginal aquatic vegetation transplanted from other local waterbodies. These transplants are already becoming well established.
- 6.4. The proposed changes to the planting scheme effectively amounts to a relocation of the same area of planting however it would be carried out in different parts of the site. No change to the approved species, number of plants and planting specification is proposed. The changes to the planting scheme reflect the changes to the final landform and to allow a more effective management of the grassland areas.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1. The site has been worked for sand and gravel and infilled using indigenous clay arising from elsewhere within the WMP. The landform created although not in accordance with approved scheme is an acceptable alternative and thus approval is being sought for this landform in order that final restoration and planting can be completed.