GWYNDY QUARRY, LLANDRYGARN, LLANNERCHYMEDD, ANGLESEY LL71 7AW

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED EXTRACTION OF TWO ADDITIONAL LIFTS TO EXISTING QUARRY TO -10 METRES BELOW AOD.

RESTORATION PROPOSALS

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GWYNDY RESTORATION PROPOSALS

1. Introduction

1.1. Policy MWYN 9 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Local Plan requires planning applications for mineral workings to provide a comprehensive scheme of restoration, aftercare and afteruse. The restoration proposals should have regard to the potential for natural re-colonisation or for enhancing or providing wildlife habitats, agriculture, forestry, geo-conservation and amenity use and the potential for community, economic and recreational benefit.

1.2. Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12 February 2024) requires that when mineral extraction operations cease, the site needs to be reclaimed to a high standard and to a beneficial and sustainable after-use so as to avoid dereliction and to bring discernible benefits to communities and/or wildlife.

2. Existing Site and Current Conditions

2.1 The site currently consists of an open quarry void with areas of spoil around the western periphery. The outer flanks of the quarry support mixed scrub, woodland and areas of rough grassland. To the northwest of the site, the quarry processing plant is located together with graded stockpiles of worked quarry material. The existing plant area will remain its current position for the life of the quarry. Mineral extracted from the proposed quarry depth extension will be crushed, screened and graded on the quarry floor, thus not generating any additional ground level impact.

2.2 The wooded area comprises mixed native tree species which are approximately 30 -40 years old. The eastern flank supports emerging scrub woodland comprising a mix of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Goat Willow. Interspersed with these areas are areas of rough grassland.

2.3. Within the quarry void itself, areas of scrub vegetation are beginning to develop on the upper benches generally comprising Goat willow and Hawthorn. There are patches of non-native Buddleia intermixed with these.

3. Protected Species

3.1 As set out in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment for the site submitted with this application, there is a series of ponds in and around the quarry. All of these ponds have been subject to eDNA testing. The only pond which was found to be likely to support a Great Crested Newt (GCN) population was Pond 1 which is located immediately to the northeast of the operational quarry. Given the proximity of the pond to the quarry face, it is considered highly unlikely that GCNs would be present within the working quarry area.

3.2 There is potential, however, for enhancement of GCN habitat in this part of the site which will be unaffected by the proposed depth extension, through the creation of additional scrapes and ponds and the installation of newt hibernacula. It is proposed that these works would be carried out in advance of the implementation of the depth extension once planning permission has been granted.

3.3. To the northeast of the site, there is an area of deciduous woodland. This woodland comprises mature trees which offer the potential for the installation of bird and bat boxes which would be undertaken upon the granting of planning permission for the depth extension.

4. Proposed Planting Associated with the Application.

4.1 Final restoration at Gwyndy will not be achieved for a considerable time as it is anticipated that with the proposed depth extension at the quarry will have an anticipated life of 30 -35 years, depending upon market demand.

4.2 The final restoration proposals for the site are set out in the Final Restoration Plan JA-HA_GWQ-1-6-25. The quarry void will gradually fill with water once mineral extraction ceases and pumping no longer takes place. Around the periphery of the quarry, there is potential for habitat retention and creation. On the eastern margins of the water body, an area of acidic grassland will be created. An area of deciduous woodland will be planted on the west of the site adjacent to the quarry entrance. Substantial areas of mixed scrub woodland will be created on the eastern, southern and northwestern periphery of the quarry. Finally additional GCN habitat will be created in the form of scrapes and ponds in the vicinity of Pond 1.

4.3 It will not be feasible to stop pumping water from the site until the mineral resource has been exhausted. It is predicted that once quarrying has ceased that it could take twenty years for the water level to reach the levels shown on the plan to reach full water rebound. Consequently, the interim position in respect of restoration is important.

4.4 In the first planting season following the granting of planning permission, it is proposed that the areas to the south and east of the quarry which are currently bare ground, will be planted with a shrub/woodland mix as outlined in Table 1 below

Table 1 Shrub/Woodland Mix

Species	**%**
Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn) 60-90 cm	15
Prunus spinosa (Blackthorn) 60-90 cm	15
Salix caprea (Goat Willow) 60-90 cm \	15
Quercus robur (Oak) 90-120 cm	20
Ilex aquifolium (Holly) C/G	15
Betula pendula (Birch). 90-120 cm	20

4.5 These will be planted and 2m centres and protected with shrub guards and 1.2m high tree shelters. All plants to be pit planted with 5 litres of planting compost per pit. During the initial three years of establishment, the base of all trees and shrubs will be maintained in a weed free condition. Glyphase herbicide will be applied a minimum of three times during the growing season. During any extended dry periods all plants will be watered using a water bowser.

4.6 It is anticipated that given this planting specification, all plants should be well established after year 3 after planting. The planting will be inspected on an annual basis and any losses will be replaced in the next available planting season.

4.7 With regard to the existing internal slopes within the quarry, it is proposed that these should be hydroseeded with an acidic grassland/wildflower mix as set out in Table 2 below. This will be carried out in the first planting season following the grant of planning permission.

Table 2 Acidic Grassland/Wildflower Mix

Wildflowers (to constitute 20% of total seed mix)	*0.8% Achillea millefolium* – Yarrow 0.5% *Agrimonia eupatoria* – Agrimony 1.0% *Anthyllis vulneraria* – Kidney Vetch 0.4% *Betonica officinalis* – Betony *2.0% Centaurea nigra – Common Knapweed* *0.2% Cynoglossum officinale – Hound's-tongue* *1.0% Daucus carota – Wild Carrot* *1.0% Echium vulgare – Viper's-bugloss* *1.6% Galium verum – Lady's Bedstraw* *1.0% Leucanthemum vulgare – Oxeye Daisy* *0.4% Lotus corniculatus – Birdsfoot Trefoil* *0.6% Medicago lupulina – Black Medick* *2.0% Plantago lanceolata – Ribwort Plantain* *1.5% Poterium sanguisorba ssp sanguisorba – Salad Burnet* *2.0% Prunella vulgaris – Selfheal* *0.8% Ranunculus acris – Meadow Buttercup* *1.4% Ranunculus bulbosus – Bulbous Buttercup* *0.6% Rumex acetosella – Sheeps Sorrel* *0.2% Silene latifolia – White Campion* *1.0% Silene vulgaris – Bladder Campion*

Grass Species (to constitute 80% of total seed mix, sown at a rate of 20kg per hectare.	*6.0% Agrostis capillaris – Common Bent* *6.0% Agrostis vinealis – Brown Bent (w)* *24.0% Cynosurus cristatus – Crested Dogstail*

4.8 It is proposed that this seed mix is hydroseeded on to suitable growing material and carried out in September/October to allow establishment over the autumn period. Where establishment is poor, seeding will be repeated to ensure a diverse sward is established. Pernicious perennial weeds will be removed by spot spraying. In addition, to the inner slopes, suitable ledges within the quarry will also be seeded. It is accepted that these areas will provide only a temporary habitat during the operational life of the quarry and thereafter until such time as the water level within the quarry void rises.

4.9 The site will be subject to a detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) which will ensure that all proposed new habitat areas are successfully established and managed. Buddleia currently occurs throughout the quarry site, and consequently one of the key objectives of the LEMP will be to ensure that this is effectively controlled. It is anticipated that the production and approval of a LEMP will be a condition attached to any planning approval for the site.

5. Interim Restoration of Benches

5.1. It is anticipated that the total period of mineral extraction will be in the region of 30 -35 years, during which time there is potential for the creation of temporary habitats to be developed on worked out benches. It is proposed that where spoil is available on the lower benches these could be hydroseeded to create rough grassland.

5.2. As stated above, the final water level will be achieved in the region of twenty years from the cessation of mineral extraction. During that time a ramped access track will be maintained at all levels to ensure that wildlife is able to ingress and egress the waterbody. At each level it will be possible to establish some marginal wetland habitat, accepting that over time these will be lost as the water level rises.

6. Final Restoration

6.1. Once mineral extraction is completed, the plant area at ground level will be removed and the site will be levelled, ripped and soiled. Thereafter the former plant area will be planted with a mixed deciduous woodland mix as outlined below.

Betula Pendula Corylus avellana

Crataegus monogyna Prunus avium Quercus robur

6.2 All plant material will be supplied as 80 – 120 cm transplants and planted as specified for the scrub woodland mix.

6.3 It is proposed that the quarry entrance and associated access is retained to facilitate access for future maintenance.

6.4 Given that the longer term the quarry void will be largely filled with water, the scope for community, economic or recreational reuse is limited and consequently the final restoration benefit will principally be the creation of new wildlife habitats.