

Meredith Baker
Wiltshire Council
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN



By email only to: meredith.baker@wiltshire.gov.uk

12 July 2023

Dear Meredith,

APPLICATION NO: PL/2023/03736

DESCRIPTION: Variation of conditions 3, 6 & 7 of Planning Permission N/88/02615 and Removal of Condition 4 of N/88/02615

LOCATION: Knockdown Quarry, Knockdown, Tetbury, GL8 8QY

Thank you for consulting the Cotswolds National Landscape Board¹ (the Board) on this proposed development, which would be located within the Cotswolds National Landscape².

In reaching its planning decision, the local planning authority (LPA) has a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.³ The Board recommends that, in fulfilling this 'duty of regard', the LPA should: (i) ensure that planning decisions are consistent with relevant national and local planning policy and guidance; and (ii) take into account the following Board publications⁴:

- Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Management Plan 2023-2025 ([link](#));
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to Landscape Character Types (LCT) 11 (Dip Slope Lowland);
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, regards to LCT 11 ([link](#)) including Section 11.6;
- Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change ([link](#)); and
- Cotswolds National Landscape Board Position Statements ([link](#)).

Having reviewed the application, the Board has **no objection, subject to any variation of conditions taking into account our recommendations below.**

Policy CE1 of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan states that proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape, should have regard to, be compatible with and reinforce the landscape character of the location, as described by the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategies and Guidelines for Landscape Character Type 11, Dip-Slope Lowland, within which the site is located, seek to ensure that quarry restoration plans respect the landscape character and tranquillity of the Dip-slope Lowland, support restoration plans that restore to agriculture, biodiversity and/or quiet recreation and resist after use for in-fill or recycling material from outside the Cotswolds. The Dip-Slope Lowland is described within the Cotswolds Landscape Character Assessment as being *"gently sloping, undulating lowland...[with a]...strong and structured farmland character"*.

Cotswolds Conservation Board

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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Chairman:
Brendan McCarthy

Vice Chair:
Rebecca Charley

This application seeks to regularise identified breaches in quarry operations pursuant to planning permission ref. N.88.2615 which provides for the phased extraction and restoration of the main quarry at Knockdown Quarry to agriculture where the consented restoration profile is generally consistent with the original ground levels. The main quarry area can broadly be split into two areas; the northern landfill area and the southern quarry area. Extraction is now complete in the main quarry area and the northern landfill area is being restored using imported waste materials. It is anticipated that the restoration of the northern landfill area will be completed by the end of 2025, however the previous operator has deposited waste in the northern landfill area above the consented restoration contours. Due to restrictions on the permitted imports, no further waste can be imported to the main quarry to complete its restoration other than waste materials necessary to complete the restoration of the northern landfill area of the main quarry.

The proposed variation of conditions therefore seeks to enable changes in the restored profiles of the northern and southern quarry areas, with the northern quarry area restored to agricultural use above the original ground levels and the southern quarry area restored below the original ground levels.

The ongoing restoration of the northern area of the main site is still taking place using imported waste soils and if not ceased, will continue until the end of 2025. The Board considers that this is unnecessary and that no further importation should take place to raise the ground level further as the site has already been infilled in excess of the permitted restoration contour plan.

We welcome the revision to restore the main quarry site southern area without the use of imported inert waste and only using site-won spoil from the quarry operation. As such we recommend that an appropriate condition is worded to ensure that only insitu, site-won materials shall be used in the restoration of the southern quarry area. This condition should require confirmation that all materials referred to in the stockpiled area have been derived from the site and do not include imported waste. Although the proposed restoration will see the lowest point of the southern area being some 10m lower than the surrounding land, the Board considers that given the current restrictions on importing waste to the southern area, this is acceptable.

As such, we support the recommendations of the Environment Agency in respect of any new conditioned restoration plan which should be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This plan should include:

- a current survey drawing to show the extent of the existing restoration;
- an isopach drawing showing the depth of restoration so far; and
- a calculation for the volume of materials still required to meet the final restoration contours.

Without prejudice, should the Council be minded to grant planning permission, we would recommend that the discharge of the varied conditions should be closely monitored to ensure compliance, in the interests of the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this response further.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Joyce MRTPI

Planning Officer

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NOTES:

- 1) The name used for the organisation associated with the AONB designation is the Cotswolds National Landscape Board. At times this is abbreviated to National Landscape Board or The Board. The legal name of the organisation remains the Cotswolds Conservation Board but this name is no longer used in most circumstances.
- 2) Cotswolds National Landscape is the new name for the Cotswolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The new name takes forward one of the proposals of the Government-commissioned 'Landscapes Review' to rename AONBs as 'National Landscapes'. This change reflects the national importance of AONBs and the fact that they are safeguarded, in the national interest, for nature, people, business and culture.
- 3) Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/85
- 4) The documents referred to in our response can be located on the Cotswolds National Landscape website under the following sections
 - a. Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2023-2025
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/management-plan
 - b. Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/lca
 - c. Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/lsg
 - d. Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ldlc
 - e. Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ps1 www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ps2