

Design & Access
Statement

Nant Llesg Surface Mine

Incorporating Land Remediation



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The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2009

Design and Access Statements

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanies an application for full planning permission by Miller Argent (South Wales) Limited (“the Applicant”) for the Nant Llesg Surface Mine, Incorporating Land Remediation. The site covers approximately 479.1 ha of land west of Rhymney and north and west of Fochriw in the County Borough of Caerphilly. The proposal is to mine approximately 6 million tonnes of coal from the land using surface mining methods and to facilitate the remediation of land within and adjacent to the mine to address public safety and land drainage concerns. All coal from the mine would be processed and dispatched to market via the existing Cwmbargoed Disposal Point to the south-west of the mine, within which a new building housing a new coal washing plant would be built to prepare coals arriving at the disposal point from both Nant Llesg and Ffos-y-Fran sites and render them suitable to meet the needs and specifications of the market.
- 1.2 The DAS has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 as amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2009 and the guidance on the preparation of DAS set out in the Technical Advice Note (TAN12): Design (June 2009). Consideration has also been given to the ‘Design and Access Statement Information Sheet’ published by Caerphilly County Borough Council and the Welsh Government leaflet ‘Design and Access Statements’ published in July 2009).
- 1.3 It should be noted that the Nant Llesg scheme is primarily a surface coal mining scheme, which itself is exempt from the requirement to provide a Design and Access Statement – see article 4D of The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended) and TAN 12, Appendix 1, paragraph A1.1.
- 1.4 However, a DAS was requested by Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) and therefore one has been prepared to accompany the planning application. It should be emphasised that whilst this DAS relates to the project as a whole, the consideration of ‘design and access’ is confined to those elements of the scheme which lend themselves to such an assessment (notably internal and external access and the design of on-site buildings and plant), rather than the primary mining and engineering components which comprise the key elements of the scheme.
- 1.5 The 1995 Order stipulates that a design and access statement should explain:
- “(a) the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and
- (b) how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.”
- 1.6 The Order requires that in relation to **design**, the statement must explain the design principles and concepts applied to: environmental sustainability; movement to, from and within the development; the character of the development; and community safety aspects. It must also demonstrate steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design takes that into account in relation to its proposed use and each of the above aspects.
- 1.7 In relation to **access**, the statement must explain the policy/approach adopted and how access policies of the development plan have been taken into account; how issues affecting access have been taken into account; and how features ensuring access will be maintained.

1.8 The guidance in TAN12 provides that in relation to ***design*** a DAS should explain the design concepts and principles applied to the development and the DAS as a minimum should include concepts and principles in relation to:

- Access;
- Character (including layout, scale, appearance and landscaping);
- Community safety;
- Environmental sustainability; and
- Movement to, from and within the development. (ref TAN 12, Appendix 1, para A1.5).

2 The Nant Llesg Design and Access Statement

2.1 In order to include all information required by TAN12, the DAS for the Nant Llesg scheme is structured as follows:

- Site location and site description (section 3);
- Project need and policy background (section 4);
- Project information (section 5);
- Character: scale, operational areas, project buildings, landscaping, appearance and sustainability (section 6); and
- Access, including movement to, from and within the development (section 7).

3 Site Location and Site Description

Site Location

- 3.1 The Nant Llesg site is located to the west and south west of Rhymney and to the north and west of Pontlloftyn and Fochriw in the County Borough of Caerphilly.
- 3.2 Immediately east of the planning application site boundary lie the Heads of the Valleys Industrial Estate and the Capital Valley Eco Park. The roads to the west of the estates mark the western limit of the Rhymney settlement boundary and the residential area of Rhymney lies approximately 300m or so further east. The western application boundary is defined by the unclassified road known as 'Fochriw Road', which runs northwards over the Gelligaer and Merthyr Urban Common from Cwmbargoed towards the A470 Heads of the Valleys Road. The northern extent of the site generally follows the line of the 'Nant Carno' watercourse, which meanders just north of the site boundary. The southern limit of the 'Nant Llesg Surface Mine' is largely defined by South Tunnel Road, which is an unclassified road over the Gelligaer and Merthyr Urban Common (CL38) that runs east-south-eastwards towards Fochriw and Pontlloftyn.
- 3.3 The proposed site can be described as being comprised of five general areas or categories of land:

- **Operational Area of Surface Mine** 222.80 ha
The central area of the mine north of South Tunnel Road, within which all excavations for coal working, overburden storage, coal washing and stocking and the main operational activities of the mine would take place.
- **Peripheral Areas of Surface Mine** 178.14 ha
North of South Tunnel Road and to the west, north and east of operational area. Primarily for remediation of shafts, adits and other old mining disturbance; environmental controls such as water treatment areas, soil/baffle mounds and acoustic/visual screening; and the diversion of services.
- **Additional Remediation Land** 55.03 ha
Land south of South Tunnel Road, included for land remediation works associated with the surface drainage of historic colliery spoil tips north of Fochriw.
- **Land for Road Improvements** 1.69 ha
Land along the public roads leading off the junction of the Bogey Road and Fochriw Road to the north and east of Cwmbargoed Disposal Point.
- **Cwmbargoed Disposal Point** 20.40 ha
That part of the disposal point within the County Borough of Caerphilly, within which a new coal washing plant is proposed, and including land for the development of an additional water recycling facility.

Total Planning Application Site Area**478.06 ha**

- 3.4 Drawings MA/NL/PA/002 and MA/NL/PA/003, which accompanies the planning application, identifies the site location and project layout respectively.

Site Description

- 3.5 The Nant Llesg site covers some 479.1Ha and consists primarily of upland urban common and agricultural grazing land on the western side of the Upper Rhymney Valley. The urban common relates to Registered Urban Common Land forming part of the Gelligaer & Merthyr Common (CL38). There is no residential dwelling within the development boundary although there are a number of residential settlements to the east and south of the site with a few isolated dwellings to the north. A number of access tracks and public rights of way cross the site and the site is traversed and flanked by unclassified public roads. There are several small and one large water body within the site boundary, Rhaslas Pond, the southern embankment of which is being considered for scheduling as a Scheduled Monument by Cadw.

4 Project Need and Policy Background

The need for the proposed scheme

- 4.1 As recognised by Mineral Planning Policy Wales and Mineral Technical Advice Note 2: Coal, minerals can only be worked where they lie. The Nant Llesg coal has been identified as a valuable and recoverable coal resource for more than 25 years, having been initially identified by the former British Coal Corporation and included in the South Wales prospectus for the privatisation of the coal industry in 1994.
- 4.2 The need for the coal has been set out in detail in the planning statement and demonstrates the value of what is sought after, good quality, indigenous coal resource for steel, power generation and other industries. The contribution the resource can make to the local and national economies with support for two principal industries in South Wales is the primary part of the need case. The Nant Llesg reserve is currently the only available and substantial resource of low volatile Welsh Dry Steam Coal in South Wales that is particularly suitable for the intended markets. The delivery of this high quality coal reserve would enable blending and support of other smaller indigenous supplies from different suppliers to the same markets, consequently supporting rather than displacing other indigenous supplies. At the same time, however, the delivery of the reserve would offer commercial benefits to the power and steel industries by offering a lower cost indigenous coal resource to directly displace higher cost imports and security of supply avoiding the possibility of foreign political influence.
- 4.3 The reserve must, however, be delivered in an environmentally acceptable and sustainable way and the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the planning application considers all likely environmental impacts that have been identified during what has been an extensive assessment procedure. The ES has been integrated with a full Health Impact Assessment (HIA), which also accompanies the planning application. The HIA considers the health and well-being of the community and informs the Sustainability and Carbon Statement that is another stand-alone report accompanying the planning application. The integrated and iterative way in which findings during the preparation of these reports have informed and shaped the design of the Nant Llesg scheme will help ensure that a much needed and important coal resource can be delivered to Wales' steel and power generation markets in the most environmentally acceptable and sustainable manner.

Policy background

- 4.4 The key planning policy and technical guidance/advice documents relevant to Nant Llesg include:
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 4, February 2011;
 - Minerals Planning Policy Wales (MPPW), December 2000; and
 - Minerals Technical Advice Note 2: Coal (MTAN2), January 2009.

4.5 In addition to the above, the following have been taken into account in the preparation of this statement:

- Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12), June 2009
- Design and Access Statement Information Sheet published by Caerphilly County Borough Council;
- Caerphilly Local Development Plan Policy – policies SP6(D) and SP19 which relate to accessibility, and CW3 relating to highway design considerations.

5 Project Information

5.1 The proposed development that forms the basis of this DAS is for the mining of up to 6 million tonnes of coal using surface mining methods on a site that covers approximately 479.1ha. In addition to the recovery of a valuable reserve of Welsh Dry Steam Coal, the Nant Llesg scheme includes provision for the following:

- Cwmbargoed Disposal Point - The area of application land that lies within Cwmbargoed Disposal Point has been included to accommodate changes to the operational layout that have proved necessary to accommodate the installation of an additional coal washing plant and its associated feed and product stocking areas, which would need to be used with a higher throughput and over longer working hours to accommodate the additional tonnage that would be delivered from the Nant Llesg scheme as well as to extend the life of the part of Cwmbargoed Disposal Point that falls within the planning application from the expiry of its current permitted use, so as to enable its use for the duration of the Nant Llesg scheme;
- Inspection, assessment and the making safe of disused mine shafts and adits located within the site to improve public safety in the area;
- Tip remediation works on land to the south of the operational surface mine to address the scouring of tip material into the 'Nant Bargod Rhymni' watercourse north of Fochriw that is contributing to deposits of silt building up at the Parc Cwm Darran Country Lake north of Deri and which will require significant public expenditure to remove absent the scheme;
- The inspection and treatment/removal/capping as necessary of waste materials deposited at the Merthyr Industrial Services inert landfill site in the southern sector of the site. This will remediate the tip to remove any public health and safety issue and to enable reinstatement of the land to common upon completion of the scheme.
- The removal of a considerable three-dimensional network of old underground workings within the coal working area of the surface mine that constitute a significant source of the present mine water pollution that discharges into the River Rhymney via the Bute Watercourse, which is currently considered to be the fifth worst in Wales and which is considered unlikely to be able to be addressed by public body intervention in the absence of the scheme.
- The improvement of visibility along the southern approach to the Bogey Road / Fochriw Road junction, removing the potential for traffic conflicts at this point on the highway network.
- Restoration works at the end of coaling to include improvement of the landscape and biodiversity interest of the site; accessibility to the public and connection with nearby communities; provision of a range of habitats offsetting the habitat loss due to the operations; and a reflection of the history and archaeology of the area in landscape features.
- The provision of a number of buildings including a staff office and welfare block, a security gatehouse, on-site plant workshops, and car parking.

5.2 The overall aim of the proposal is to recover as much of the 'Nant Llesg' coal resource as is environmentally practicable to principally meet the current market demands of the energy, steel

and other industries; to deal with the above land remediation issues at no cost to the public purse; and to restore the site to an enhanced design that would meet the modern-day needs of the surrounding agricultural and residential communities.

5.3 Those elements of the scheme which are of relevance to this DAS are:

- (i) The improvement of visibility at the Bogey Road / Fochriw Road junction;
- (ii) The construction of a new access to the Nant Llesg site, off the eastern side of Fochriw Road;
- (iii) The use of existing access points to the Cwmbargoed Coal Disposal Point (CDP);
- (iv) The construction of plant and buildings outside the coal preparation area at the Nant Llesg site; and
- (v) Indirectly, the use of a new washing plant at the CDP (also the subject of an additional separate application)

6 Character

Project Scale

- 6.1 The Nant Llesg scheme covers an area of approximately 479.1 ha although the excavation area only covers an area of 96ha. It is considered that the recoverable reserve could be extracted from within the proposed site area as set out in this application and that the recoverable reserve has been limited by the following constraints:
- Previous surface coal workings to the north;
 - A large diameter Very High Pressure Gas Main to the west;
 - The Fochriw Road to the west;
 - A 500m standoff from the Rhymney Settlement Boundary to the east;
 - The availability of suitable overburden and soil storage space which limits the depth and southern limit of the works.
- 6.2 The site would be worked down to the Little Vein coal seam horizon at a depth ranging from 26m to a maximum of approximately 165 metres. The seams to be worked within the main excavation area are those from the Eighteen Inch (Black Pins) down to the Little Vein. A full list of the seams to be worked can be found in the ES chapter on 'Hydrogeology' (Chapter 10).
- 6.3 The site would be worked from the west to east; this would allow better screening of the excavation works from the village of Rhymney. To mitigate impacts on the village of Rhymney, a visual and acoustic screening bund would be constructed as part of the initial excavation works. The location of this bund is shown on planning application Drawing MA/NL/PA/003. This bund would be constructed during the first 4+ months from the start of overburden excavation and would remain until all excavation was completed and would be removed at the end the final phase of restoration of the site.

Scheme Layout – design iterations

- 6.4 The proposal has been through a number of design iterations to develop the best proposal possible that is environmentally, socially and economically viable. The iterative design process has included various options for the extraction boundary, remediation options, restoration options and mitigation options.
- 6.5 Between 2011 and 2013 there have been over ten design iterations in order to develop the most unconstrained, efficient and practical design possible. The largest of these changes relates to the eastern excavation boundary which has been reduced by 300m since the initial design layout. This was principally as a result of consultations with the local community and mineral planning authority. This resulted in the withdrawal of the limit of coal working excavations away from the Rhymney settlement boundary by a further 300m, providing a stand-off for coal working of 500m from the settlement boundary.

6.6 The initial design layout was defined by a number of 'absolute constraints' including the location of coal, previous coal workings to the north, a very high pressure gas pipeline to the west, public roads and availability of suitable overburden storage space. Further design iterations were then made based on constraints that were identified during a community consultation exercise and the preparation of the ES. To illustrate the process of design evolution, the key design iterations are listed below (See Drawing MA/NL/PA/003 for Site Layout):

- The operational boundary of the mine has been withdrawn to 500m from the settlement boundary and the depth of the proposed excavation has been reduced by some 25m. This has resulted in a smaller maximum void during mining excavations and a smaller overburden mound.
- Work outside the operational boundary is now restricted to the remediation of pits and adits, the improvement of drainage from old coal tips which contribute to silting up of the lake in Park Cwm Darran and the provision of a visual and acoustic screening bund to the north and east of the operational boundary to minimise the effect on the community of Rhymney. These would involve works of short duration with no permanent detrimental environmental effects;
- The project has been consequently reduced from a 9 million tonne to a 6 million tonne surface coal mine incorporating land remediation;
- Areas where site investigations have indicated that no land remediation is necessary have been removed from the scheme;
- Areas to the east and west of the operational area of the mine have been allocated for early land remediation and/or restoration. Significant provision is to be made available within these areas for public access and common grazing within 2 years from the commencement of coaling operations to enable north south links across common land to be maintained throughout the majority of the life of the scheme;
- The waste landfill site north of South Tunnel Road has been incorporated into the site and will be remediated at the start of site operations and eventually restored as part of the adjoining common land;
- The overburden storage facility has been remodelled to form a single storage mound to lie over the remediated landfill site. The form of the single and smaller mound provides improved visual aspects when viewed from nearby communities;
- The southern embankment of Rhaslas Pond is being considered for scheduling as a Monument by Cadw. It is therefore being treated as a Scheduled Monument and afforded appropriate protection within the scheme and incorporated as such within the restoration strategy for the site;
- The area of Cwmbargoed Disposal Point within Caerphilly has been incorporated within the scheme and a 400 tonnes per hour Dense Medium coal washing plant has been introduced within the disposal point to prepare coals to a higher specification to meet the changing demands of the market;
- A water recycling facility has been introduced at Cwmbargoed Disposal Point to store surface water run-off and provided increased water availability during periods of dry weather. The primary purpose of the facility is to ensure an adequate water resource for the new coal washing plant and to conserve mains water.

- The proposal to import up to 250,000 tonnes of coal per annum by road to the Cwmbargoed Disposal Point for onward transmission by rail has been removed from the scheme;
- Proposals to re-profile the old colliery spoil tips north of Fochriw to address the problem of material scoured from the steep-sided tips silting up the lake at Darran Valley Country Park has been replaced by proposals for an engineered drainage scheme using natural materials and a programme of soft land remediation works to exposed tip surfaces. The revised scheme provides a more pragmatic solution without unnecessarily disturbing existing habitats of high ecological interest;
- The application site boundary has been amended in places to include additional land required for the Fochriw Tips drainage improvements and to exclude other areas where no work is intended.
- The intended plant complement for the site has been reviewed and will now be fitted with extensive sound attenuation at the point of manufacture to significantly reduce sound emissions from plant operating on site;
- All ancillary mine facilities have been removed from the land south of South Tunnel Road and relocated within the site to the north of the road.
- Peat cells have been introduced to store, manage and protect significant quantities of peat that have been found on the site for use in the eventual restoration of the land;
- Certain features of particular archaeological and cultural heritage interest have been identified at various locations within the land remediation areas for protection during site operations and incorporated within the restoration strategy for the scheme;
- Land in the ownership of the applicant has been identified outside the scheme for ecological and biodiversity enhancement to off-set and compensate for the loss of certain ecologically interesting habitats within the site;
- The layout of the site offices, car park, workshops, vehicle washing facility, access road and on-site coal washing plant has been revised slightly to accommodate environmental facilities, avoid heritage features and to ensure the passage of clean vehicles only via the site access point;
- Despite the existing road network being assessed as suitable for proposed site traffic, it is now intended that works be carried out to improve the vertical alignment of Fochriw Road to the south of its junction with Bogey Road to avoid the potential for conflict at this point. The works would be short term works carried out in the early stages of site operations but would provide permanent improved visibility for traffic leaving and approaching the junction and reduce the risk of future accidents;
- There would be reduced site working before 0800 hours and 1200 hours on Saturdays when a reduced plant fleet would be employed. This is to allow for reduced noise limits of 42dB during these working hours. During Mon-Friday there would be a full fleet;
- An outline training initiative has been introduced to provide skill types that could be beneficial for employment other than on site. Details of the initiative are set out in Appendix MA/NL/ES/A05/002 (Economic Statement).

6.7 The final site layout is set out on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003, but in summary the layout includes:

- Excavation area (Drawings MA/NL/PA/004-008): excavation and backfilling operations will progress eastwards in stages:
 - Stage 1 – development of box cut
 - Stage 2 – development of maximum void
 - Stage 3 – maximum void to start of backfilling of overburden
 - Stage 4 – progression to end of coaling
 - Stage 5 – final backfilling and restoration to final contours
- Overburden storage: Overburden from the excavation area would initially be transported to form a visual and acoustic bund to the east and north of the mining area. After this, all material excavated in the box cut and the development to maximum void would be taken to the main overburden storage area to the south of the mining area. After development to maximum void material excavated would be taken from the southern overburden storage area and used to start the progressive restoration of the site. During stage 4 (progression to end of coaling) all material excavated would be placed behind the advancing void continuing the progressive restoration of the site.
- Site access point: there will be a single access point (Access Point A) to the surface mine off the eastern side of 'Fochriw Road', which forms the western boundary of the site. Access Point A is approximately 130m to the north of the junction between the Fochriw Road and South Tunnel Road.
- Site access road: Within the site, a metalled road would be constructed from the site access point at Fochriw Road to the workshop area as shown on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003. This would provide access for clean vehicles to and from the office and staff-welfare area and the workshop area and for the haulage of coal from the site.
- On-Site Vehicle Washing Facility: The vehicle washing facility would be a fully automated facility located at the location indicated on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003 for use by all vehicles leaving the operational area of the surface mine. All vehicles would be cleaned before travelling along the metalled internal road south to Access Point 'A'. The unit would operate automatically, cleansing the underbody and wheels of each vehicle as it passes slowly over the washing facility.
- Cwmbargoed Disposal Point Access Points: The access and exit points to be used by coal lorry traffic for gaining access in and out of Cwmbargoed Disposal Point (CDP) are both well-established existing access points off the Bogey Road. They are identified on the Site Layout Drawing MA/NL/PA/003 as Access Points 'B' and 'C'. Wagons would be washed in the existing facility prior to leaving the CDP onto the public highway.
- Coal Haulage Route: All coal from the site would be transported to Cwmbargoed Disposal Point for processing and onward dispatch to customers via a coal haulage route within the site to Access Point A, along Fochriw Road and Bogey Road, entering Cwmbargoed Disposal Point at Access Point B off the 'Bogey Road' and returning to the site in the reverse from Access Point C.

- Water treatment areas and establishment of site drainage: these would be constructed before any soil stripping and/or excavation works are to be carried out and maintained for the duration of site operations. They will be used in restoration of the land to create ecological features.
- Fuel, Oil and Chemical Storage: Provisions for the delivery and storage of oils, fuels and chemicals would be located at the workshop area within the Nant Llesg Surface Mine. Further facilities for the delivery and storage of oil and fuel already exist at Cwmbargoed Disposal Point.
- Remediation areas: On land south of the South Tunnel Road (CCBC owned land), remediation works will take place to address the scouring of tip material into the 'Nant Bargod Rhymni' watercourse north of Fochriw that is contributing to deposits of silt building up at the Cwm Darran Country Park Lake at Deri.
- Office buildings and staff welfare: All site office accommodation, workshops and vehicle parking facilities would be located on the Nant Llesg site. No extra facilities (other than for coal washing and processing) would be built at Cwmbargoed Disposal Point. The office complex, access road, car parks, workshop and vehicle wash would be located as shown on the Drawing MA/NL/PA/003.

Landscaping

- 6.8 Throughout the layout design process, existing landscape features were taken into consideration. These included designated landscapes, archaeological and nature conservation interests, topographical features and common land.
- 6.9 Although relatively long-term, surface mining operations are considered to be a temporary use of the land. Nevertheless, due to the period that the overburden storage mounds would remain in place, they would be profiled to make them as visually acceptable as practicable and seeded to grass at the earliest possible growing season.
- 6.10 A visual and acoustic screening bund would also be constructed along the eastern and northern edges of the mining area, which, together with the grassing of the overburden mounds would, once formed and until they are removed, improve the visual aspect of the mine when viewed from the surrounding areas.

Appearance

- 6.11 The planning application site boundary, shown on Drawing MA/NL/PA/001, encompasses the operational area of the proposed surface mine; areas of land included in the scheme for land remediation works adjacent to the operational mine; and the area of Cwmbargoed Disposal Point within the County Borough of Caerphilly that would be used for the processing, handling and dispatch by rail and road of coal. Within this area the following facilities would be located within the mine area north of South Tunnel Road.

Site buildings

- 6.12 The buildings that would form part of the project are of a diverse nature. The office/staff welfare building and security gatehouse would be of traditional cavity wall construction with rendered finishes to the exterior and double pitched tiled roofs, while the workshops and coal washery building would be of an industrial type with steel framed construction and profiled sheet cladding and roofing materials. Parts of the office and welfare block would be open to the public, as would part of the security gatehouse. The workshops and washing plant building, however, would be in operational areas of the mine and Cwmbargoed Disposal Point, where access would be restricted to operatives and site employees, although contractor's and sub-contractor's employees would also have access at times.
- 6.13 Within the project area, the project buildings would be developed at the locations shown on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003. It is anticipated that the detailed design of these buildings will be submitted for approval by the minerals planning authority prior to their being constructed. Such designs would accord with the parameters, principles and standards set out in this Design and Access Statement.
- 6.14 None of the buildings proposed under the Nant Llesg scheme are considered to be 'permanent', although their use would extend to the end of operations on the Nant Llesg Surface Mine. As these operations are expected to continue for such durations, they would be designed as if they were to be 'permanent structures'.

Staff Office and Welfare Block

- 6.15 An indicative design including elevations and internal layout of the Staff Office and Welfare Block can be seen on Drawing MA/NL/PA/021. It will be a single storey building with an internal floor area of some 765 m².
- 6.16 Vehicular access to the building will be via a new hard surfaced access road leading from site access point 'A' on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003 to the car parking area shown on the drawing. Pedestrian access will be over level hard surfaced pavement between the car parking area and the building.
- 6.17 In the interests of inclusive design, four disabled parking spaces would be provided immediately adjacent to the building. The disabled parking space would be laid out in accordance with Drawing MA/NL/PA/011, providing additional space on either side for ease of ingress and egress by wheelchair users. There would be adequate dropped kerbing and/or ramps provided between the car parking space and slab-level of the building.

Security Gatehouse

- 6.18 An indicative design including, elevations and internal layout of the Security Gatehouse can be seen on Drawing MA/NL/PA/021. It will be a single storey building with an internal floor area of some 25 m².
- 6.19 The gatehouse would be located immediately adjacent to the site entrance and all visitors, service and delivery vehicles will be required to report to the building on arrival at the site. Vehicular access from Fochriw road will be via the site access point 'A'. Six car parking spaces would be provided alongside the cabin for drivers to park their vehicles while reporting to the gatehouse. Pedestrian access would be over level metalled road surface between the car parking spaces and the building.

6.20 In the interests of inclusive design, one disabled parking space would be provided immediately adjacent to the security building. The disabled parking space would be laid out in accordance with Drawing MA/NL/PA/014, providing additional space on either side for ease of ingress and egress by wheelchair users. There would be adequate dropped kerbing and/or ramps provided between the car parking space and slab-level of the building. The entrance door would be of adequate width for wheelchair access (0.8m¹ min on a single door) and there would be no raised threshold. The reception counter/window would be dual level to provide appropriate heights for all users.

On-site Plant Workshops

6.21 These would be industrial style buildings as follows:

- Main Workshop building measuring 24.04m(w) by 34.20m(l) and 15.07m high;
- Subcontract Workshop building measuring 10m(w) by 20m(l) and 10m high;
- Welding Bay measuring 10m(w) by 20m(l) and 7.5m high.

6.22 Detailed design of the facilities for operatives such as office, mess room, kitchen and washroom will be subject to later approval with CCBC.

Building at Cwmbargoed Disposal Point to House New Coal Washing Plant

6.23 This would be an industrial style building. The key characteristics of the plant are as follows:

- 400t/hr "Parnaby" Dense-Medium coal washing plant;
- housed within a building 43m(w) x 48m(l) x 20m (h); and
- all protruding conveyors and hoppers to be covered.

6.24 The design of the building has to a large extent been dominated by the need for an overhead gantry crane within it at eaves level for the assembly and disassembly of component parts of the plant during maintenance. The dimensions of the building have therefore been dictated by those of the coal washing plant. Due to the size of the building required to house it, consideration has been given to the need to ameliorate the visual aspect of the structure when viewed from the adjoining highways. This has included selection of a dual colour scheme as indicated on MA/NL/PA/014. This element of the project is the subject of a separate planning application and

¹ Building Regulations Part M, 2004

DAS although it is included within this DAS as it also forms part of the planning application for Nant Llesg.

Water Treatment Areas

6.25 Water treatment areas are to be installed at locations WTA1 to WTA4 on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003. The facilities will consist of settlement lagoons and attenuation ponds set into the ground with water treatment facilities to control the quality of the water to be discharged. The design of these features is typical of the surface mining industry and reflects the need to meet the required environmental standards in the treatment of the likely quantities of water to be handled at each location. There will be little or no structure above ground level other than features to ensure against unauthorised access and for health and safety reasons.

6.26 The design of security features incorporates industry standard health and safety provisions. Security features would include high chain-link security fencing with barbed wire to the top; appropriate warning signs; and the provision of appropriate lifebelt facilities. Typical detail of the design of the water treatment areas, the security fencing, signage and lifebelt facilities can be seen on Drawings MA/NL/PA/030 to MA/NL/PA/032.

Soil Storage Areas

6.27 The design of the soil storage facilities incorporates the industry practice of utilising the need to store soil materials in the construction of baffle embankments along the periphery of the coal mining area. These embankments assist in screening operations from surrounding areas. The dimensions of the embankments are dictated by established industry practices that have been required or agreed by the Welsh Government Agriculture Division.

6.28 Soil storage mounds would be a maximum of 5m high and constructed using machinery equipped to do so without the need to traverse the soils unnecessarily or to impose low ground pressures if essential to do so. The sides of the embankments would be graded at 1 in 2, smoothed and seeded to grass at the earliest opportunity.

6.29 Peat stripped from the site would be stored within banded storage cells to control the moisture content of the peat so it doesn't become excessively dry at the surface, preventing oxidation and loss of material.

6.30 Typical dimensions of typical soil storage mounds and peat storage cells are shown on Drawing MA/NL/PA/033 and MA/NL/PA/034 respectively.

Sustainability

6.31 Rather than the land being restored to a formal recreational use such as a country park, a restoration strategy has been adopted that provides informal recreational uses incorporating urban common and open access land, footpaths and bridleways to act as links between the already established Cwm Darran and Bryn Bach Country Parks. Such design strategies are intentionally sympathetic to existing ecological and nature conservation interests and would be built on and created as part of the detailed phased restoration designs to be submitted for the approval of the mineral planning authority in advance of each phase of the progressive restoration. The restoration strategy also, as far as is practicable, seeks to guide informal public recreation away from ecological and nature conservation interests.

6.32 The aim of the restoration strategy is therefore to deliver these aspirations whilst restoring a landscape in keeping with the existing area and enhancing the landscape character and amenity of the area.

6.33 Within that overall aim, there are a number of objectives for the strategy:

- To improve the landscape and biodiversity interest of the site;
- To improve accessibility to the public and connection with nearby communities;
- To provide a range of habitats offsetting the habitat loss due to the operations;
- To reflect the history and archaeology of the area in landscape features.

6.34 A sustainability and carbon statement has been prepared which accompanies this planning application for Nant Llesg surface mine

Community Safety

6.35 The only project buildings that would be available for public access would be the staff office and welfare building and the security gatehouse. These are set within the fenced curtilage of the operational mine as shown on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003 and accessed from a dedicated access point off Fochriw Road, Access Point 'A', as depicted on the drawing. This would be the only entrance to the surface mine that would be available to the public and would be a gated entrance with a manned security gatehouse (manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). A similar design currently exists at the main entrance to Cwmbargoed Disposal Point, which is also accessed off Fochriw Road.

6.36 The design of the surface mine and disposal point incorporates perimeter fencing that would be maintained in good order at all times. Detail of the fencing would be a matter for the approval of the local planning authority and specifications have been provided in the planning application for industry typical designs.

6.37 Signage is proposed to be placed at regular and strategic points around the site perimeter fencing warning the public of danger, deep excavations and to keep out.

6.38 Due to the presence of deep water, all water treatment areas associated with the surface mine would be separately fenced and securely gated. Details of such facilities have been included with the planning application and the specification of this fencing will be as shown on drawing MA/NL/PA/031. Gates on such facilities would be kept locked at all times. All locks would be shrouded to prevent the padlocks being cut and disguise the foothold opportunity. All locks would be of closed shackle design and "Sold Secure Gold" standard. The security design of these installations would be a matter for approval of the local planning authority.

6.39 The on-site plant workshops have been located within the operational area of the mine well away from the mine entrance and well beyond the area where controlled public access would be available (See Drawing MA/NL/PA/003). All of these facilities would be well lit and be within the coverage of the on-site CCTV system.

6.40 The project building that would house the coal washing plant would be located within the existing operational area of Cwmbargoed Disposal Point. The building has again been located well away

from that area of the site where controlled public access would be available; the existing main office block and Visitor/Education Centre. The area that is available for public access within the site has already been designed to be segregated at all times from the operational area of the disposal point by a security barrier.

- 6.41 Within the existing Cwmbargoed Disposal Point there is extensive CCTV coverage which feeds back to the security gatehouse, this is manned 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The site is well lit by a number of 15m lighting columns with dusk sensors and all other access points to the Disposal Point are either locked or manned by security personnel outside of normal working hours.
- 6.42 Project buildings have been designed to be secure through the inclusion of 'secure by design' principles and appropriate levels security measures, such as vandal proof materials, suitable locks, CCTV and 24hr on-site security personnel. All project buildings, car parking areas and maintenance areas would be well lit and covered by CCTV. All CCTV systems would have a minimum storage capability of 30 days data and would feed back to a 24 hour 7 day manned location.

7 Access; movement to, from and within the development

Vehicular Site Access

- 7.1 There would be a single access point (Access Point A) to the surface mine off the eastern side of 'Fochriw Road', which forms the western boundary of the site. The location of this access point is shown on Site Layout Drawing MA/NL/PA/003. Access Point A is approximately 130m to the north of the junction between the Fochriw Road and South Tunnel Road.
- 7.2 It would be used for general access to the site by all staff and operatives, visitors, service and delivery vehicles. It would also be used by coal lorries travelling between the mine and Cwmbargoed Disposal Point. Before leaving the operational area of the surface mine, all coal lorries and other vehicles would be cleaned at the vehicle washing facility shown on MA/NL/PA/003, thereafter travelling on a clean metalled internal roadway before entering the highway at Access Point A. Operatives cars and offices delivery vehicles would not require cleaning as all run on surfaced roads.
- 7.3 The detailed layout of the access point to the surface mine would be designed to provide adequate room for vehicles, including heavy goods vehicles, to pull clear of the highway before having to stop at the gatehouse or at the site gates if closed. Adequate vision splays would be provided to ensure safe entry and egress by all (Drawing MA/NL/PA/014).

Internal movements

- 7.4 All coal from the site would be transported to Cwmbargoed Disposal Point for processing and onward dispatch to customers. Coal would enter Cwmbargoed Disposal Point at an existing access point (Point B) off the 'Bogey Road' and leave the site from a second existing access point a little further to the west (Point C). The proposed haul route between the site and

Cwmbargoed Disposal Point is shown on Drawing MA/NL/PA/003. The coal haulage route for delivery of coal to the disposal point would travel along just 680 metres of public highway, while the return route would include just 805 metres.

- 7.5 Although not a requirement of the Highways Authority, Miller Argent proposes to carry out certain improvement works to the road to the south of the junction between Fochriw Road and the Bogey Road to improve visibility for traffic using the junction and reduce the potential for conflict. The proposed works are therefore included within this planning application as indicated on Drawings MA/NL/PA/024-26.
- 7.6 It is proposed that improvements to the vertical alignment of the road to the south of the junction, improved signage and additional road markings be carried out to improve safety at the junction.
- 7.7 The adjustment to the vertical alignment of Fochriw Road running south of the junction would involve reducing the level of the crest to the south of the junction by up to approximately 1.5 metres in order to increase visibility to the south from the current 70m to 160m.

Personnel Access

- 7.8 The following accessibility design principles are taken into account in the detailed design of the project buildings and their surroundings:
 - provide for safe access to and from the site using car and motorcycle and the use of more sustainable means of transport by cycle or on foot;
 - have regard to the principles of inclusive design;
 - doorways to and within the buildings would have no raised thresholds and would be a minimum of 1.10m wide to permit ease of access by wheelchair users.
 - design layout of buildings to correspond with vehicular and pedestrian movement to and from the buildings whilst harnessing inclusive access design principles.
 - disabled parking provided as shown on Drawings MA/NL/PA/011 & MA/NL/ES/PA/14, as would parking for motorbikes and cycles
 - create safe and secure environment for visitors and employees through the use of adequate lighting, security fencing and vandal proof materials;
 - use good quality and durable hard surfacing materials that are fit for purpose and aesthetically pleasing;
 - provide appropriate signage and external furniture to again facilitate inclusive access design principles.
- 7.9 The offices and staff welfare facilities within the surface mine have been located close enough to the mine entrance to enable ease of access by private vehicle and a suitable environment away from the operational area of the mine, whilst also being far enough away from the entrance to provide an element of security for parked vehicles.

- 7.10 The layout of all project buildings, including the industrial type buildings, has been designed to provide a safe environment both internally and externally to the buildings. As such, all floor and ground surfaces would be built to provide a safe, good quality surface to walk on, using durable hard surfacing providing ease of cleaning and a pleasant aesthetic appearance to the workspace.
- 7.11 The design reflects the requirement for visitors to report to the security gatehouse on arrival, where they would be directed to their destination. The gatehouse design caters for use by wheelchair users and those with impaired mobility. A disabled parking bay would be provided alongside the gatehouse and the entrance door and foyer would be appropriately sized, with the reception window/counter being of the appropriate height.
- 7.12 Signage would be incorporated into the design to waymark the route to the office block, car park, workshops and the mine. Warning signs would be erected appropriately to prohibit visitors travelling beyond the safety of the accommodation area and to prevent delivery vehicles and contractors visiting the workshops from straying into the mine. Details of all signage would be aimed at providing a safe and secure environment for visitors and the workforce alike and would be a matter for the approval of the local planning authority.
- 7.13 Lighting would be incorporated to ensure that all areas surrounding the office/welfare accommodation, the workshops and coal washing plant were adequately lit outside periods of daylight. Any purpose-built walkway beyond lit areas would be provided with appropriate bollard or footpath lighting. All such materials would be of a design that was vandal proof or ostensibly so.
- 7.14 The design includes a sufficient number of disabled parking spaces to meet the anticipated needs of employees and visitors. They would be located adjacent to the office and welfare blocks and appropriate drop kerbing and ramps installed to provide ease of access to the buildings by disabled and mobility impaired employees and visitors.
- 7.15 The internal layout of the office and welfare block has been designed to provide ease of access to all. A central corridor provides direct and unrestricted access along the length of the building, obstructed only as necessary to meet building and fire regulations. Doors would be provided with glass panels at suitable heights where appropriate for safe use by all. Office accommodation and welfare facilities have been designed to provide accommodation that is spacious enough to be comfortably used by employees and visitors with mobility issues, whilst meeting the criteria for sustainable design for all.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The Nant Llesg proposal would deliver a scheme that properly addresses the necessary issues of sustainable design and accessibility for all. The layout of the project buildings and their location within the scheme has proceeded through an iterative design process to integrate them as much as possible with the setting of the landscape and the cultural and natural heritage features along the edge of the mine.
- 8.2 From a design aspect, the Nant Llesg proposal as a whole has similarly gone through a number of iterations taking account of environmental and technical constraints before arriving at the final design.
- 8.3 From a point of view of controlled access to the mine, community safety has been thoroughly considered and incorporated into the scheme design. Environmental considerations have influenced the design and layout of the scheme and its project buildings. Accessibility of the workforce, visiting contractors and the public has been integrated into the design process and has influenced the layout of the buildings, their surroundings and their internal layout. In so doing, the ease of use of the buildings by all has been a pre-requisite. The movement of individuals to, from and within the development has been adequately considered and improved wherever possible. The resultant design is one which provides safe and easy access to all.
- 8.4 In terms of Local Plan Policy, the scheme accords with Policies SP6 D of the Caerphilly Local Development Plan. The layout of the scheme has paid due regard to the natural and historic environment by avoiding such areas of environmental interest.
- 8.5 The design of the building for the coal washing plant closely matches the context of the existing industrial environment within the disposal point.
- 8.6 The staff office/welfare building at the surface mine with its parking facilities and adjoining site entrance with security gatehouse very closely reflects the similar environment of the existing accommodation area at the Cwmbargoed Disposal Point. Provisions for accommodating and hence encouraging all modes of transport at both the surface mine and at the existing disposal point is in line with the principles of sustainable development. The detailed design, which will be subject to the approval of the mineral planning authority, would adhere to the principles of accessible design by providing full, easy and safe access for all. All these matters accord with Policy SP6 D.
- 8.7 Local Plan Policy SP19 seeks to implement improvements to the existing transport infrastructure. The proposals for the surface mine clearly incorporate extensive measures for accommodating all modes of transport providing accessibility for all. In so doing, it is providing the means for increasing accessibility to employment and provides the means to support doing business with visitors and contractors, which themselves employ people who may be disabled or have mobility issues. The design criteria that have been, and will be engaged in the detailed design of the scheme, ensures there is no tendency to inadvertently exclude anyone. This accords with the principle of Policy SP19 A.
- 8.8 Criteria B, C, D and E of Policy SP19 concern themselves with improvements to matters associated with transport links within and around settlements or air quality management areas. There is no such air quality management area in the locality of the proposed scheme and the scheme cannot be said to influence the objectives of the other criteria either positively or negatively. However, the scheme's introduction of a significant number of well-paid jobs into the locality, together with the direct and indirect socio-economic benefits that they would bring, could

be said to have a positive influence on the reinforcement and function of the nearby settlements by improving the wellbeing of the community. This would accord with criteria C of Policy SP19.

- 8.9 Policy CW3 requires, inter alia, that new development proposals should have regard to the safe, effective and efficient use of the transportation network; new access roads are designed to a standard that safely and effectively accommodates the scale and nature of the traffic they are intended to serve; and the proposal takes into account the restrictions relevant to the class of road, ensuring that movements and speeds are controlled through appropriate design to ensure highway safety and amenity”.
- 8.10 The layout of the proposed access point to the Nant Llesg site off Fochriw Road is shown on plan ref MA/NL/ES/PA/014. This confirms the ability to create an access to the appropriate engineering standard, with the necessary signage, which will ensure safe use by the vehicles which will enter and leave the site. The full engineering details will be discussed and agreed with the Highways Authority prior to construction. And will conform to the required engineering standards. These issues are discussed further in Chapter 4.0 of the Planning Statement, and the use of the access is considered in the Traffic Assessment presented as Chapter 7.0 of the ES
- 8.11 In line with the requirements for preparing a statement relating to the accessibility of project buildings as set out in the ‘Design and Access Statement Information Sheet’ published by Caerphilly County Borough Council, this statement:
- Sets out how the design takes account of the local planning authority’s policies in respect of access;
 - Explains how the design ensures ease of access into and within the site and buildings for all users that can reasonably be anticipated to use the buildings;
 - Confirms that there are no problematic issues associated with the existing access arrangements to the Cwmbargoed CDP.
- 8.12 In relation to **design** TAN12 provides that a DAS should explain the design concepts and principles applied to the development and the DAS as a minimum should include concepts and principles in relation to:
- Access;
 - Character (including layout, scale, appearance and landscaping);
 - Community safety;
 - Environmental sustainability; and
 - Movement to, from and within the development.
- 8.13 All these matters have been considered and applied to the scheme’s design wherever practicable, and the design has adhered to the design concepts and principles outlined above.
- 8.14 The design and accessibility issues associated with the proposed design can therefore be regarded as being in accordance with both national government guidance and local planning policy relating to the content and requirements of DAS.



Contact Us

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These details will put you in touch with PPS Group which coordinates our Nant Llesg public consultation activity.