

North York Moors National Park Authority

District/Borough: Redcar and Cleveland Council
Parish: Irton

Application No. NYM/2018/0585/CVC

Proposal: Verification check of conditions 4, 18, 33, 34, 45, 46, 47, 52, 57, 60, 64, 68, 70, 71, 73, 76, 79, 81, 87, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95 & 97 of planning approval NYM/2017/0505/MEIA

Location: Land at Woodsmith Mine (formerly Doves Nest Farm & Haxby Plantation) Sneatonthorpe (minehead); underneath 252 km² of the NYMNP (winning & working of minerals); a corridor extending underground from the edge of the NP boundary to Wilton Complex (mineral transport system); Ladycross Plantation near Egton, Lockwood Beck Farm near Moorsholm, Tocketts Lythe near Guisborough (intermediate shaft sites); site within the eastern limits of the Wilton Complex Teeside (tunnel portal)

Decision Date: 26 October 2018
Extended to: 15 November 2018

Consultations

Borough/District (Environmental Health Officer) – Has no objection.

Parish – Has not responded. The period for receipt of representations expired on 28 September 2018.

Highways – Has not responded.

Environment Agency – Has no objection but comment that a bespoke environmental permit to discharge water arising during temporary dewatering of excavations will be required.

Natural England – Has no objection.

NYCC Lead local Flood Authority – Has no objection.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – Confirm they are satisfied that condition 52 can be discharged in relation to bats.

Ministry of Defence – Has not responded. The period for receipt of representations expired on 28 September 2018.

NYM Conservation Team – Has no objection.

Background

Approval is sought for the partial discharge of planning conditions attached to permission NYM/2017/0505/MEIA (ie the substantive permission for the mine development) relevant to Phase 7 of construction works at the Woodsmith Mine site. In summary, the scope of the Phase 7 covers the following development activity:

- Completion of Service shaft headgear chamber;

- Excavation of the Service shaft to a depth of 83.17m AoD (ie c.120m below ground level) using a Vertical Shaft Sinking Machine (VSM);
- Excavation of Production shaft headgear chamber;
- Excavation of the Production shaft headgear chamber to a depth of 83.66m AoD;
- Erection of a surface water run-off silt treatment facility building and associated works;
- Erection of temporary facilities (including the temporary 45m headframe for the MTS shaft), temporary winching and ventilation arrangements, and supporting infrastructure including workshops to enable mobilisation of the deep shaft sinking contractor);
- Earthworks and drainage works relating to the above activities;
- Provision for use of contingency grouting during construction of the MTS shaft, as necessary in the event of difficulties in completing the shaft to a depth of 120m below ground level using the VSM.

Works associated with Phase 7 are expected to take place over a period of approximately 12 months commencing in January 2019.

Approval is also sought for the full discharge of Condition 33 of permission NYM/2017/0505/MEIA which requires that a scheme for the prior notification of blasting be submitted for approval.

The works contained within the scope of Phase 7 mainly comprise a continuation of the intensive construction activity, focussed within and immediately around the shaft platform area, that has taken place over the past 18 months. Works within the shaft platform area will take place over a 24 hour working period and, in general terms, be subject to the same range of controls and mitigation measures applied to recent construction activities. The application is accompanied by updated assessments of matters including noise and vibration, emissions to air, hydrogeological risk assessment, groundwater management scheme, surface water drainage scheme, non-domestic wastewater management scheme, construction environment management plan and construction traffic management plan. Where they remain relevant, other documents approved through previous phases of conditions discharge are proposed to be carried forward to Phase 7 works.

Main Issues

An important element of the work within the scope of Phase 7 includes the erection of the 45m high temporary winding tower to be used in the excavation of the Minerals Transport System shaft. This structure, which is expected to be required for a period of around 2 years, will represent one of the most visually prominent elements of the construction works. The design of the MTS winding tower has been selected to help reduce the overall massing of the taller elements of the structure. The applicant is also seeking agreement to the colour of the cladding of the tower, and has submitted sample materials in support of this. The tower will be visible against a range of backdrops, including sky, woodland and the sea, depending on the location of the observer and the prevailing weather conditions. Following review of proposed colour options it is considered that the use of Colourcoat HPS2000 Ultra in Goosewing Grey (RAL 7038) represents an appropriate choice and should be formally approved. Materials for smaller structures associated with the Phase 7 works would be coloured dark green to be generally consistent with other lower height structures currently on site.

A further element of the proposals includes the construction of a building to house a surface water treatment facility, which is currently in use in association with the mine surface water drainage system. Locating of the facility within a building is intended to help ensure its effective operation over the winter months, as well as to improve the visual appearance of the site. The building would be located in the south eastern corner of the surface water treatment area. This area is located within the lowest part of the main mine head surface

site and is well screened by the existing topography and established woodland, such that it is not visible from publically accessible locations outside the boundary of the site. The building would be approximately 18m by 18m square, with a maximum height of approximately 10.4m. It is proposed that the building would be constructed of materials to match those intended to be used for the main mine head buildings (ie a pre-cast concrete panel base with timber wall cladding above and a dark grey profiled sheet metal roof). It is considered that the provision of effective measures to manage surface water drainage, in particular in order to ensure that excessive silt is not discharged into surface waters downstream of the site, is an essential element of mitigation for the mine development and that the proposed building represents an appropriate means of supporting this objective. In order to ensure the satisfactory visual appearance of the building, it is however recommended that sample building materials are submitted for approval by the National Park Authority. The applicant has also confirmed that external lighting in association with use of the building would be sensor operated so that it is only needed when required (ie for safe access and egress).

The application contains details submitted under the terms of condition 33, relating to a scheme for the prior notification of blasting. Although, as a result of the continuing evolution of the construction methodology, blasting is not expected to arise during works to be carried out within the scope of Phase 7, the applicant is seeking to discharge this condition now in case such a need does arise, and to ensure that a suitable scheme is in place in anticipation of blasting activity during subsequent phases of construction work. The submitted scheme indicates that the developer will contact every resident and local business within a 1.5km radius of the Woodsmith Mine site and invite them to be notified via email and/or text message (or exceptionally where this is not practicable, by other means) in advance of any specific blasting activity. Residents outside the 1.5km zone will be able to register through the Sirius Minerals website to receive the same notifications. Messages will be sent to registered parties 30 minutes before each individual blast. A blasting schedule will also be posted on the Sirius Minerals website. The scheme also contains provision for the approach to communication and notification of blasting to be kept under review and revised as necessary, in discussion with the National Park Authority, in the light of experience with implementation.

No objections or adverse representations to the submission have been received from consultees. Although no response has been received from the Highways Authority, information contained in the submission indicates that traffic volumes associated with Phase 7 would remain within those approved via established Construction Traffic Management Plans, and that existing controls on traffic volume and routeing arrangements would remain in place throughout the duration of Phase 7. It is therefore considered that the submitted details are acceptable for the purposes of the partial discharge of conditions 4, 18, 34, 45, 46, 47, 52, 57, 60, 64, 68, 70, 71, 73, 76, 79, 81, 87, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, and 97 for the purposes of Phase 7 conditions discharge activity and the full discharge of condition 33.

Contribution to Management Plan Objectives

Approval on the limited basis proposed is considered likely to help meet Policy E3 which seeks to ensure that new development will not have a detrimental impact on the landscape of the National Park and help meet Policy E3, which seeks to ensure that new development will not have a detrimental impact on the landscape of the National Park.

Explanation of how the Authority has Worked Positively with the Applicant/Agent

Officers have held pre-application discussions with the developer to discuss requirements relating to the submission and the issues that arise.