

APP7/3

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Section 78 Appeals**

**(i) Proposed western extension and consolidation scheme**

**Appeal ref number APP/L6940/A/20/3265358**

**(ii) 'Section 73' time extension request**

**Appeal ref number APP/L6940/A/21/3282880**

**Craig yr Hesg Quarry, Pontypridd**

**Hanson UK**

**Summary of Proof of Evidence of Rachel Canham with regard to Noise**

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## **1 Introduction and Scope of the Evidence**

- 1.1 My name is Rachel Canham. I am a Director of Walker Beak Mason Limited (WBM), which is an independent acoustic consultancy. I hold the degrees of Bachelor of Engineering in Electroacoustics from Salford University in 1993 and a Master of Science in Environmental Acoustics from London South Bank University in 1998. I became a Chartered Engineer in 2003 and a Fellow of the Institute of Acoustics in 2011. I have been practicing as an acoustic consultant since 1993 and joined WBM in 1999.
- 1.2 WBM has been involved with noise issues at Craig yr Hesg Quarry since 2013, including undertaking routine noise monitoring, preparation of the noise chapters for the western extension ES and supplementary ES (SES), and the Section 73 (S73) ES.
- 1.3 My evidence deals with the noise arising from quarrying and processing activities at Craig yr Hesg Quarry, both from the existing site and the western extension, and considers appropriate site noise limits for the assessment of such activities. It also addresses the noise related reasons for the refusals of the western extension and S73 applications, and the further comments received from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) with regard to noise as set out in their Statement of Case (SoC).
- 1.4 In summary, the results of baseline noise surveys undertaken by WBM demonstrate that noise limits were suggested for the adjacent sensitive receptors that are appropriate or, in some cases, conservative. Indeed, there is an argument for higher noise limits at some receptors. The results of compliance site noise monitoring have demonstrated that the limits previously proposed by WBM have been complied with, and the results of site noise calculations demonstrate that these limits will continue to be met, should the appeals be allowed. Therefore there is no unacceptable noise impact on sensitive receptors due to operational site noise from Craig yr Hesg quarry.

## **2 The Appellants Case**

- 2.1 Noise was not specifically listed as a reason for refusal for the western extension although the refusal did reference paragraph 70 of MTAN 1 that does mention noise. The reason for refusal for the S73 application refers to the extension of impact of noise (amongst other issues) affecting the amenity and well-being of residents within Glyncoch.
- 2.2 With regard to noise, the Statement of Case prepared by RCT criticised the background noise data and site noise limits used for the noise assessments for both the western extension and S73 applications, stating that the background noise data in the noise chapters were not comprehensive or up to date.

## **3 Noise Assessment**

- 3.1 In my evidence I have referred to previous noise measurements undertaken by WBM for the western extension and S73 noise assessment and also presented additional baseline noise measurements undertaken in response to the Statement of Case from RCT.
- 3.2 It is disputed that the background noise levels presented in the noise chapters of the environmental statements prepared for both the western extension and S73 applications are not comprehensive or up to date. My evidence refers to noise measurements undertaken by WBM between 2013 and 2021, including at locations where site activity was not audible or undertaken when the quarry was not operating.
- 3.3 Notwithstanding the above, additional baseline noise measurements were undertaken at the various noise sensitive receptors in the vicinity of Craig yr Hesg Quarry when the asphalt plant was not operating and all quarry/processing operations had been shut down for the day. The measurements took place on Thursday 17 March 2022. At least 3 x 1 hour baseline noise samples were measured at all locations.

- 3.4 The guidance of Minerals Technical Advice Note (Wales) 1: Aggregates (MTAN1) can be used to set appropriate site noise limits derived from background noise levels. MTAN1 requires noise impacts to be minimised to acceptable levels where aggregate extraction and related operations occur close to noise sensitive areas. Achieving the site noise limits specified in MTAN1 should therefore indicate that site noise is at an acceptable level to avoid a significant effect at noise sensitive properties.
- 3.5 The recent baseline noise measurements in March 2022 have shown that all of the suggested site noise limits set out in the western extension ES and SES, and the S73 ES are appropriate or more stringent than required following guidance in MTAN1.
- 3.6 The results of compliance site noise monitoring demonstrated that the site noise limits have been complied with.
- 3.7 The shortest working distances between the respective dwellings and the various items of fixed and mobile plant have been used in the acoustic models in order to calculate reasonable worst case site noise levels. All of the calculated reasonable worst case site activity noise levels have shown compliance with the suggested site noise limits.
- 3.8 Therefore there is no unacceptable noise impact on sensitive receptors due to operational site noise from Craig yr Hesg quarry.

## **4 Summary and Conclusions**

- 4.1 The proof of evidence regarding noise has addressed the reasons for refusal for the western extension and S73 applications, and the further comments received from RCT with regard to noise set out in their Statement of Case.
- 4.2 The results from the March 2022 baseline noise measurements support the previously suggested site noise limits set out in the noise assessments for the western extension ES and SES and the S73 ES. The additional noise measurements confirmed that the suggested site noise limits are either appropriate or more stringent than required when following guidance in MTAN1.

- 4.3 All of the calculated reasonable worst case site activity noise levels at the receptors used for the western extension and S73 application have been shown to meet the site noise limits previously suggested by WBM.
- 4.4 The noise assessments for the western extension and S73 applications have demonstrated that noise from site activities complies with the current noise limits for the existing site, and will continue to comply with appropriate site noise limits based on guidance in MTAN1, should the appeals be allowed.
- 4.5 In so far as the March 2022 baseline data and application of relevant guidance in MTAN1 suggest higher noise limits for some receptors than those proposed in the western extension ES and SES and S73 ES, the Inquiry will need to consider whether the site noise limits proposed in these documents would still comply with the tests for planning conditions. The site noise limits would be unchanged at two locations (Pen y Bryn and Rogart Terrace) but would be higher at the remaining receptors (Conway Close, Garth Avenue, Cefn Heulog and Cefn Primary School).

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