

Planning Application



**PROPOSED WESTERN EXTENSION TO
EVERSLEY QUARRY (PHASES 1 TO 4)**

**WITH PROGRESSIVE
RESTORATION TO HEATHLAND, MIRE
AND COMMERCIAL FORESTRY**

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

AUGUST 2010

LAFARGE AGGREGATES LIMITED

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RESTORATION TO HEATHLAND, MIRE
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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

**PREPARED BY
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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Lafarge Aggregates Limited is seeking planning consent for a western extension to Eversley Quarry which incorporates a modification to the restoration proposals of the main quarry to introduce long term beneficial gains to the bio-diversity of the site. In 2006, a planning application was submitted to Hampshire County Council for the recovery of sand and gravel from an area referred to as the "Busta Triangle". That scheme was refused by the County Council and was upheld at a subsequent Inquiry although, at the time of submission of this current planning application, that decision is being challenged in the High Court. Notwithstanding this High Court challenge the relevant issues raised within the Planning Inspector's decision letter of January 2008 are addressed within this submission.

This submission introduces various revisions to address the concerns expressed by the County Council's Development Control Committee and issues raised during consideration of the subsequent Appeal. These revisions are summarised below.

- establishment of a Conservation Management Plan to partially replace the existing heathland management plan thus introducing a greater degree of certainty over establishment techniques required to achieve the desired heathland and associated bog and mire habitats. This Conservation Management Plan will extend for a 25 year post restoration period to ensure the bio-diversity gains are both sustainable and of long term benefit;
- modifications to the previously approved restoration plan for Eversley Quarry introducing greater connectivity between habitats including habitat improvements adjacent to the widened reinstated rides;
- modification to the proposed mire habitat within Eversley Quarry to introduce a sustainable water management control mechanism to provide long term benefit to the adjacent Castle Bottom SSSI/National Nature Reserve;
- greater stand-off from Hill House (the closest residential dwelling to the site operations) to the mineral extraction area and greater limitation on working hours whilst working in the vicinity of that property.

In November 2007, the Forest Design Plan was formally endorsed by Forest Enterprise and Natural England which provides clear nature conservation objectives for the site which reflects the requirements for the management of Special Protection Area (SPA) and SSSI designations in so far as it relates to Forestry Commission woodlands in the Thames Basin. The revised scheme of working at Eversley Quarry reflects the Forest Design objectives and are not considered to adversely affect the integrity of the SPA.

SECTION 2 SITE OPERATIONS

Method of Working

In order to recover the estimated sand and gravel reserve of 435,000 tonnes from the "Busta Triangle", it is proposed to establish a crossing point on Coopers Hill to enable articulated dump trucks to cross the highway. It is proposed that no mineral extraction will encroach within at least 120 metres of the property known as Hill House to the north of the site and special precautions will be taken whilst working within 200 metres of that property (ie works will not commence until 8.00 am). To provide further protection to the occupants of the house, an intervening acoustic screening mound will be established between the Hill House property and the mineral extraction area. Furthermore a Dust Action Plan will ensure that extra vigilance takes place whilst working within the 200 metre zone of that property. The Dust Action Plan will ensure that weather conditions are monitored, and if critical wind speeds are achieved in association with critical wind direction then operations will be modified or stopped until such time as the situation improves.

To provide a visual barrier to the users of Footpath No. 27 to the north of the site, a low mound will be established immediately south of the bridleway. This was introduced following a request from Eversley Parish Council when the previous application was being considered for the "Busta Triangle" development. A temporary permissive right of way will be provided along the western margin of Phase 2 to provide a link between Bridleway No. 11 and FP No. 27.

It is envisaged that a reptile translocation exercise will be undertaken in late summer 2011, followed by the clear felling of timber and the stripping of soils to make the area sub-optimal for colonisation by Annex 1 birds. Workings will progress sequentially over a projected three year period. The mineral will be recovered on a "campaign basis", and as dump trucks are employed an appropriate volume of mineral will be excavated in a single operation by the use of hydraulic excavators and articulated dump trucks and transported direct to the processing area. If the material is transported direct to the processing plant, then up to 40,000-50,000 tonnes of material can be moved in a single operation. The "campaign dig" direct to the processing plant would extend to approximately five weeks and would take place three times annually. The crossing point of Coopers Hill will be controlled by temporary traffic lights and the public highway kept clean at all times.

The workings will be progressively restored using on-site overburden and soils. Phases 1 and 2 will be worked and fully restored within an 18 month period to further assist in limiting potential impact upon Hill House to the north-east. The mineral underlying the bridleway (No. 11) will be removed and the right of way reinstated within less than a month.

Surface Water Management

Any water accumulating during the working of the western extension will be pumped in a controlled manner into Eversley Quarry which controls the rate of discharge off site consistent with the existing consent from the Environment Agency.

As an integral part of the “extension” proposal, heathland areas will be increased within the existing Eversley Quarry, along with the establishment of a wetland or mire system that will effectively treat a majority of surface water run-off from the site towards the Castle Bottom SSSI to the north. Surface water will pass through the mire system before filtering into the Castle Bottom SSSI in a more controlled manner than the existing approved restoration scheme for Eversley Quarry would permit. By installing such a filtration system, flow rates into the sensitive Castle Bottom mire system would be halved.

Dust Suppression

In line with the guidance contained within government guidance, and in accordance with the Company's own Environmental Management System (EMS), the following dust suppression measures are proposed:-

- sufficient water bowser capacity will be maintained at all times in order to carry out spraying operations during dry weather conditions to suppress dust rising from internal haul roads;
- all earthmoving equipment will be fitted with upward facing exhaust systems. Any vehicle leaving the site laden with processed mineral will be sheeted to restrict any potential dust emissions on to the highway; and
- special precautions will be taken whilst working within 300 m of Hill House and Hawkers Lodge.

Permanent directional dust monitoring stations will be established at Hill House, supplemented by constant visual monitoring around the entire operational area. As part of this planning application, the Company propose to implement a Dust Action Plan, the final details of which will be agreed with the Environmental Health Department by way of a planning condition if appropriate.

Traffic

The minerals recovered from the extension areas will be processed at the existing plant site and the existing levels of mineral laden HGV traffic generation will be maintained. At present, 600 tonnes of aggregates and 130 cubic metres of ready mixed concrete are dispatched in a typical working day. In addition there are 7 deliveries of cement and PFA per week. This results in the following approximate heavy vehicle movements per day:

- 30 (20 tonne) loads of aggregate, or 60 movements;
 - 25 loads of ready mixed concrete, or 50 movements;
 - 1 delivery of cement and PFA, or 2 movements;
- This equates to a total of 56 loads per day, or 112 movements.

All of the heavy vehicles accessing the site will continue to turn left out of the site towards the A327, and a sign post has been erected within the site to ensure that drivers comply with this arrangement.

With regard to traffic crossing Coopers Hill, the highway department of the County Council have previously confirmed that if appropriate traffic

management (ie traffic lights) were implemented and no more than 168 vehicles crossed Coopers Hill in any single day, then there were no grounds for objection on highway safety or capacity grounds.

Hours of Operation

It is proposed to continue to operate the existing operations at Eversley Quarry between 0730 hours to 1800 hours, Monday to Friday and 0730 hours to 1300 hours on Saturday with no working on Sundays or Public/Bank Holidays. Operations outside of these hours will be restricted to running engines, essential repairs, maintenance and pumping. In respect of mineral extraction within the extension site, the above hours will apply, although it should be noted that if the mineral is recovered on a "campaign basis" the period of extraction is very much limited. Mineral extraction operations within the Busta Triangle will be restricted to no more than 16 weeks in any twelve month period. Working within 200 m of Hill House will be further restricted to ensure no activity takes place before 8.00 am on any day, with no working on Saturday within Phases 1 or 2 (ie the area north of Bridleway No. 11).

SECTION 3 RESTORATION PROPOSALS

The restoration proposals for the proposed extension to the Eversley Quarry site seek to achieve enhancement for bio-diversity, not only within the quarry extension areas but additionally and more importantly within the existing Eversley Quarry area. Following refusal of the previous "Busta Triangle" proposals, and having regard to the Planning Inspector's findings, the restoration proposals relating to this revised submission seek to provide wider opportunities for increasing bio-diversity, whilst having full regard to the importance of rotationally managed conifer plantations for the benefit of Annex 1 birds that exist in the vicinity. To reinforce the deliverability of the proposed restoration scheme, a new habitat management programme will be produced and this will consider the Eversley Quarry and the extension area in the context of the wider nature conservation objectives of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

The revised restoration scheme not only seeks to offer greater diversity of suitable habitats within the application area, but also introduces a sustainable wetland mire system which will both filter surface water derived from the restored Eversley Quarry site and also reduce surface water flows towards the Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve. This mire system is designed as a self-managing system that will ensure the long term diversity of nationally important off-site habitats.

It is proposed to manage the restored Eversley Quarry (including extension areas) to accommodate nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler breeding and foraging habitats. The area of open spaces (ie heath or newly planted areas of conifer) available for use by ground nesting birds will be 20% or more of the quarry area.

Within the existing Eversley Quarry, heathland areas are currently required to be established and as part of the quarry extension proposals it is intended that such areas of heathland will be extended to provide a larger cohesive block of heath and wetland habitats which would be of greater ecological value than creating a small isolated block of heath

within the triangular area to the west of Coopers Hill. The lowland heathland to be established will ultimately comprise an open, relatively tree-less landscape dominated by dwarf shrubs, usually heathers, with typical species including heath, bell heather, cross-leaved heath, gorses, broom, purple moor-grass, wavy hair-grass and bristle bent grass.

Woodlarks occur in open woodland, heathland sparse grassland and light cultivations, where the common factor is well-drained, light soils. In the nesting season woodlarks feed on invertebrates, foraging by searching bare ground or through very short, sparse heather or grasses. The Dartford warbler is limited to dwarf shrub communities of lowland heathland. As a wholly insectivorous and non-migratory bird, in Britain the Dartford warbler is vulnerable to cold, winter weather and particularly to prolonged snow cover; the limits of its distribution and its population density are influenced by climate. Nest sites are low above the ground in deep, dense heather or gorse.

The existing heathland management plan recognises that although natural regeneration is a slow process, the mosaic of acid grassland, bare ground and heathland habitats can provide substantial benefits to wildlife during the process as they develop naturally to suit the local conditions. The basic principles of the existing heathland management will continue but the new conservation management plan for the site will introduce a greater degree of flexibility to the establishment processes.

Conservation Management Plan

An extended aftercare management scheme is proposed following mineral extraction to detail steps as may be necessary to bring the land to the required afteruse and to provide long term benefits to nature conservation interests. In the case of Eversley Quarry and proposed extension, the afteruse seeks to establish areas of rotationally managed coniferous plantations combined with a matrix of wet and dry heathland habitats, including a mire system that will establish a sustainable water management system which will provide greater and long term protection to the existing fragile heathland mire system that exists within the Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve.

These revised proposals will require the preparation of a new Conservation Management Plan for the restored site and this will extend to a period of 25 years following restoration and introduce a periodic review mechanism of the management provisions to ensure optimal biodiversity gain.

SECTION 4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The revised site design and restoration provisions are aimed at balancing the current and future needs of the local environment (including potential impact upon the designated SPA) with the need to extract and utilise the mineral resource. An integral part of the design process is to ensure that potentially adverse effects are avoided or minimised to an acceptable level by working to high environmental standards. The Company seeks to ensure that the development entails a long term beneficial element to the development by way of environmental improvements created through the restoration.

Visual Impacts

The revised working and restoration schemes follow a number of landscape design objectives to minimise any perceived visual impact during the operational phases and improve the area in terms of landscape and ecological value in the long-term. The assessment of visual impact is based on field surveys and interpretation of both the extraction phases and on completion of the scheme, taking account of any identified mitigating features. Operations would be phased over a planned period of time to reduce the overall impact of the scheme and the resulting landscape and visual impacts would only be temporary. The assessment indicates that the proposals would have negligible impact on the landscape character of surrounding areas.

Visually the site is generally well contained and vegetation screening, so the proposals would have a limited impact on the surrounding visual amenity. Where views of the site are possible, there may be temporary adverse visual effects. The assessment indicates that there would be no adverse landscape or visual effects following restoration of the site.

Ecology

The extension to Eversley Quarry site represents an area dominated by coniferous plantation and as such is currently of low botanical diversity. Areas to be lost or part lost include coniferous and deciduous woodland, north-south ride (acid grassland) and heathland. The removal of coniferous woodland of negligible nature conservation value would not cause a significant impact to flora or fauna of recognised nature conservation value in the short term. Conifer stands include mature and very dense young woodland and the impact of falling trees will be mitigated by timing of clearance works on the Eversley site. The greatest potential effect of the development would be the displacement of breeding bird species, although habitats within the extension site area are sub-optimal for breeding.

Castle Bottom SSSI, which is noted for its range of heathland types and in particular the rich flora and invertebrate fauna, has the potential to suffer indirect impacts caused by an alteration in hydrological regime and groundwater quality. The valley mires present within Castle Bottom in particular hold important dragonfly populations and a rich bog flora. It is essential to ensure, through mitigation and the restoration of the site and associated areas, that adverse effects do not accumulate and benefits to the nature conservation interests within the site and surrounds are achieved.

The base line ecology of the application site has been surveyed over a number of years, including results from the heathland establishment programme within the existing Eversley Quarry. A comprehensive Ecological Impact Assessment has been prepared for the proposed quarry extension proposals which considers all potential impacts, paying particular regard to the issues raised by the Inspector in his decision letter regarding the "Busta Triangle" in respect of the site's location within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The application site is located within the northern margin of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, being part

of the Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Commons SSSI, and that designation places an obligation to promote the conservation of the SPA and take steps to avoid deterioration of the habitats as well as disturbance of the species for which the area has been designated.

The proposed sand and gravel extraction works are anticipated to be complete within less than 3 years, after which the site will be returned to forestry management and heathland margins. The proposals will bring forward the felling of the woodland compartment (working phases 1-4), followed by periods of gravel extraction and replanting. The proposals also allow for Phase C of the existing Eversley Quarry to be managed as heathland, with scrub cleared to improve its ecological value at an early stage of the development.

The conclusion of the ecological appraisal is that whilst there is a minor impact to existing flora and fauna (taking into account additional measures to be included as part of the restoration of the Eversley Quarry scheme), the revised scheme of working and restoration would not adversely affect the coherence of the SPA's ecological structure and function of the habitats or populations of species for which the SPA is classified.

The proposal is not considered to adversely affect the integrity of the SPA and measures are available to ensure this remains the case through consideration of the timing of proposals and ensuring that restoration and management of the Eversley Quarry is implemented in full. Following restoration of the extension area and main quarry area more suitable and managed habitat would become available.

Noise

A detailed noise impact assessment has been undertaken to establish the existing background noise regime. At the extension to Eversley Quarry, the operations are neither intense nor complex. The proposed mitigation measures would ensure the amenity of local residents is protected in line with current good practice guidance and policy, by imposing a specific limit for day time working consistent with current Minerals Policy Statement 2 (MPS2) guidance.

Published government policy guidance recommends that planning conditions should be used to apply controls on noise emissions, with limits normally being set at particular noise-sensitive properties. The guidelines recommend a method for setting site noise limits which can be incorporated into planning conditions. They also provide advice on how the noise levels can be most effectively monitored and on remedial steps which should be taken to ensure that local communities are not subjected to noise emissions above acceptable levels.

Air Quality

Careful consideration is given to how the site activities relate to sensitive areas outside the site and, where possible, all potential dust generating activities would be located away from dust sensitive land uses and receptors. The potential for different activities to generate dust during the life of a mineral working has been carefully considered. Methods of

controlling dust include restricting vehicle speed and watering unsurfaced roads. The company will implement a Dust Action Plan consistent with central government guidance and such an approach will ensure that dust is controlled within acceptable levels throughout the site life, reflecting up to date environmental advice.

Traffic

The Transport Assessment considers the potential traffic impact of the proposal to extend Eversley Quarry and the traffic implications of the generated traffic on the highway network. The assessment also considers the implications regarding the crossing of Coopers Hill by quarry traffic and advises on appropriate layout proposals in respect of this, along with the transport implications of the continuation of quarrying at the site for a further three years. The assessment confirms that there are no road safety or highway capacity issues associated with the scheme and furthermore there are no identified highway capacity difficulties in accommodating the potential increases in traffic crossing Coopers Hill.

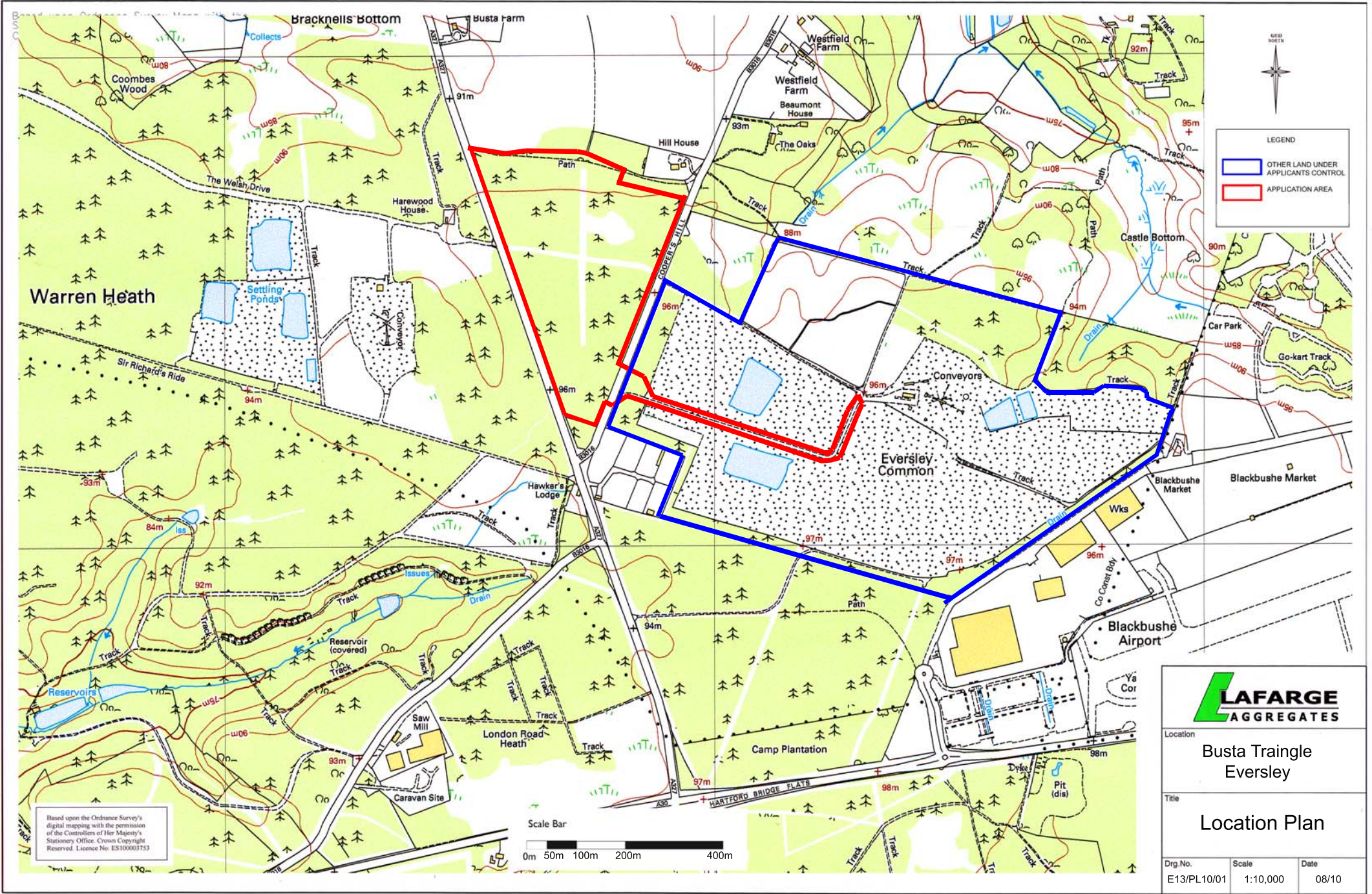
The proposed development will have no material adverse impact on the safety or operation of the adjacent highway network.

Water Quality

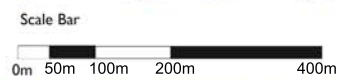
A hydrogeological and hydrological assessment has been carried out which identifies and evaluates the significance of potential impacts of quarry operations and restoration of the proposed extension to the quarry. The revised plan incorporates a wetland mire system to reduce the potential flows from surface run-off during peak rainfall events. The approved restoration scheme includes directing all of the surface run-off into a single drainage ditch that would channel water directly to the Castle Bottom NNR and SSSI, resulting in increased flows during peak events, along with the potential to affect the natural water system of the Castle Bottom mires. In contrast, the revised scheme includes the mire system, where run-off is received by a number of channels from both the existing Eversley Quarry and the western extension area. This drainage system would restrict the flow of water reaching the Castle Bottom NNR and SSSI, through increasing the residence time of water within the bog. This will reduce the peak flows entering the NNR by approximately 50% (compared to the approved scheme). The creation of a new mire, which would also act as a buffer system to water quality entering the SSSI, will provide improved long term protection to the heathland mire system.

Summary

In summary, it is considered on balance that with appropriate mitigation the proposal to recover mineral over a 3 year period as a logical extension to the Eversley Quarry can be carried out in an environmentally acceptable manner to the highest standards ensuring amenity protection is maintained at all times without adversely affecting the integrity of the designated Special Protection Area. The restoration scheme reflects governmental advice particularly in respect of promoting nature conservation initiatives in line with local and national policies. It is therefore concluded that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.



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LEGEND

- OTHER LAND UNDER APPLICANTS CONTROL
- APPLICATION AREA



Location
**Busta Traingle
 Eversley**

Title
Location Plan

Drg. No.	Scale	Date
E13/PL10/01	1:10,000	08/10



- KEY**
- RESTORED AREAS (so SOILS REPLACED) OF EVERESLEY QUARRY TO DATE
 - GENERAL WORKING DIRECTION
 - CASTLE BOTTOM SSSI
 - IMPORTED FILL (PHASES 1 & 2 ONLY)
 - APPLICATION BOUNDARY
 - EXTRACTION BOUNDARY
 - OTHER LAND UNDER THE APPLICANT'S CONTROL

Lafarge Aggregates
Busta Triangle
Eversley Quarry

WORKING PLAN



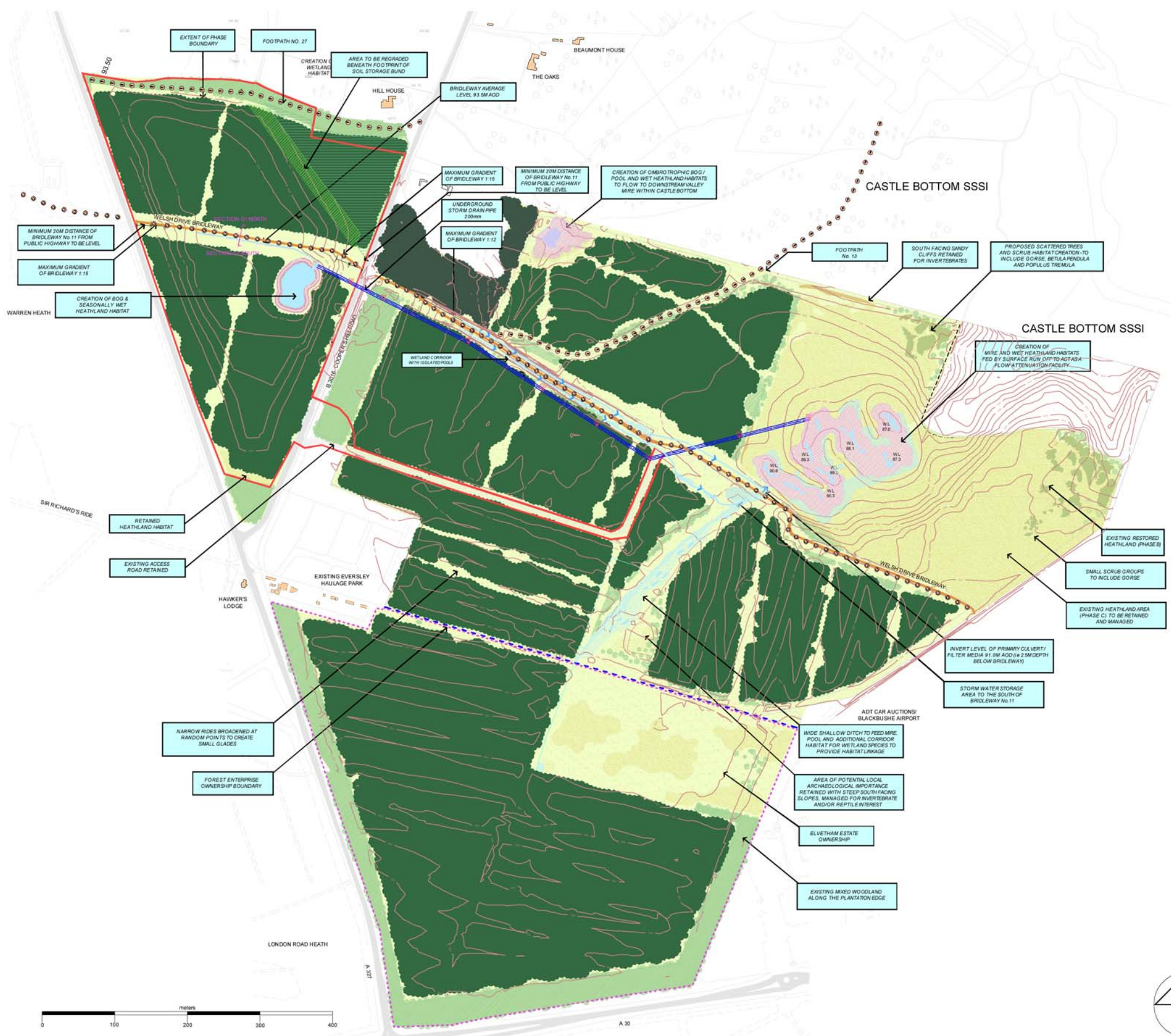
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Scale 1:3000
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E13/PL10/03 rev -

masterplanning
 environmental assessment
 landscape design
 urban design
 ecology
 architecture
 arboriculture

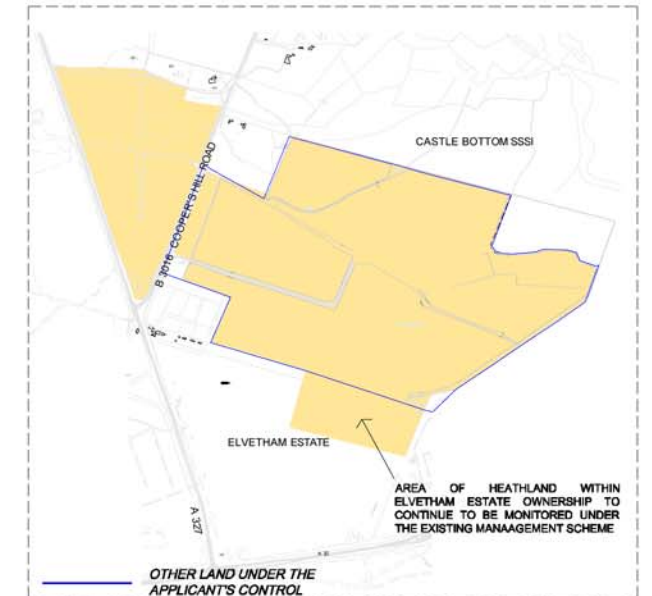
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- KEY**
- EXISTING CONIFEROUS WOODLAND
 - CONIFEROUS WOODLAND PLANTATION
 - EXISTING MIXED WOODLAND
 - RETAINED CONIFEROUS WOODLAND
 - DRY HEATH / ACID GRASSLAND MOSAIC
 - OPEN WATER
 - BOG HABITAT
 - MARSHLAND & WET SCRAPES
 - WET DWARF SHRUB HEATH
 - DRY DWARF SHRUB HEATH
 - SCRUB HABITAT
 - PROPOSED TREES
 - RETAINED CLIFF FACE
 - DRAIN AND FLOW DIRECTION
 - PROPOSED LEVEL 92.25
 - APPLICATION BOUNDARY
 - PROPOSED UNDERGROUND DRAIN
 - ELTHAM ESTATE LAND
 - BOUNDARY TO FOREST ENTERPRISE LAND
 - CROSS SECTION LINE (SEE DRAWING E13 PL10 05)



KEY PLAN : PROPOSED CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT AREA SCALE 1: 10,000 (THIS AREA EXCLUDES CONIFEROUS WOODLAND PLANTING)

Lafarge Aggregates
Busta Triangle
Eversley Quarry

RESTORATION PLAN



PRINTED AT 50% SCALE
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04 08 2010
E13/PL10/04 rev -

masterplanning
environmental assessment
landscape design
ecology
architecture
arboriculture

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