Continuation of industrial land uses at former Seiont Brickworks, Caernarfon Environmental Statement Non-technical summary

Seiont Ltd

December 2023

Revisions Control Page

Date	Summary of Changes Made	Changes Made By (Name)
07.12.2023	Issue for PAC consultation	Stephen Blunt

Contents

Continuation of industrial land uses at former Seiont Brickworks, Caernarfon – Environmental Statement Non-technical summary

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The site of the former Seiont brickworks factory is currently used as a temporary compound in connection with the Caernarfon to Bontnewydd bypass construction project, under two Planning Permissions, reference C17/0011/19/MW and C17/0107/19/LL. This area contains offices, mobile concrete batching facilities, heavy plant workshop facilities, materials processing and storage areas and associated car parking.

1.1.2 Bypass construction works are nearing completion, and the site owner wishes to continue certain operations at the site on a permanent basis. In advance of a further planning application, the applicant has prepared an Environmental Statement under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017, setting out the potential environmental effects.

1.1.3 The applicant sought the formal Scoping Opinion of the Mineral Planning Authority to agree the coverage and level of detail that would be provided in the full Environmental Statement. That Scoping process is fully set out in Chapter 1 of the Environmental Statement.

1.1.4 The full Environmental Statement consists of:

- This Non-technical summary, setting out the main environmental effects in non-technical language;
- Environmental Statement Part A (Chapters 1 – 5), describing the proposed development and its setting;
- Environmental Statement Part B (Chapters 6 – 15), describing the assessment process and the findings for the environmental topics considered;
- Appendices A – O, presenting drawings and specialist technical reports which underpin the findings reported in Chapters 6 – 14.

1.1.5 The applicant has made a separate application[1] under the Developments of National Significance process. The separate project consists of a 20 MWe gas fired short-term operating reserve (STOR) plant (sometimes referred to as a 'Peaking plant') comprising ten natural gas-fueled engines and associated infrastructure.

1.1.6 When the proposed concrete batching and materials recycling application is submitted for determination it will be accompanied by this ES. To capture and assess any 'cumulative effects' which could arise from the presence of both developments, this ES has treated the STOR plant as an addition to the current baseline. The possibility of cumulative effects is described within this Environmental Statement, in chapter 13 (within Part B).

[1] (To be submitted Jan 2024) Application ref: available to view at www. xxxxxxxxxx

2 Project description

2.1 Project history

2.1.1 The site of the former Seiont brickworks factory is currently used as a temporary compound in connection with the Caernarfon to Bontnewydd bypass construction project under Planning Permission C17/0107/19/LL. This area contains offices, mobile concrete batching facilities, heavy plant workshop facilities, materials processing and storage areas and associated car parking.

2.1.2 The operator is now seeking a new planning permission for
'Creation of new vehicular access and associated visibility splays and alterations to Waunfawr Road, creation of internal access road, stopping up of access to Plas Treflan together with the change of use of land for general storage (B8 use class), concrete batching plant area, recycling area, erection of new recycling plant building, plant maintenance and retention of workshop building, and the retention of portacabins to be used as offices with associated parking'
all on a permanent basis.

2.1.3 The location of the proposal, and the layout of activities within the application boundary, is shown in Drawings 1 and 2. Much of the site is already in use for the purposes contained in the proposal, and so minimal preparation work would be needed. The existing haul route used during bypass construction remains, but limited trimming, regrading and topping with selected aggregate is required to maintain a suitable surface for HGV traffic. The scale of the proposed activities is shown in Table 3.

Table 1 Proposed activities

Activity	Proposed Quantity
A: General Storage use (Class B8) including sorting and packing cobbles and boulders for sale	Average 10 HGV loads per week = 500 loads per year
B: Concrete batching plant area	10,000 m^3 annual output 18,000 t aggregate import/yr 3,000 t cement import/yr
C: Recycling area for soils, construction and demolition waste, including building to enclose the crusher Product sold for use off site. Any residual waste disposed of off site.	75,000 t annual throughput (concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics, soil, stones and mixtures of these)
D: Plant maintenance and storage area including retention of existing workshop/fitter shed	Serving plant and vehicles from short term company projects in NW Wales
E: Mobile offices and welfare cabins, with staff parking	Approx 15 staff between all activities 20 car parking spaces incl for visitors

3 The site and its setting

3.1 Location

3.1.1 The site of the former Seiont Brickworks lies on the south-eastern side of the town of Caernarfon, Gwynedd. The area is substantially the site of the former Seiont brickworks which comprised a brick clay quarry and brick production factory.

3.1.2 There is currently a partially-filled quarry void to the east of the application site which is owned by the applicant. The Caernarfon to Bontnewydd bypass, which recently opened, lies beyond the quarry void to the east. The house 'Plas Treflan' lies to the west of the application site and is also within the applicant's ownership. Beyond Plas Treflan to the west lies the Peblig Industrial Estate. Afon Seiont runs along part of the western boundary of the application site, beyond which lies Ysbyty Eryri and the residential estates of Tyddyn Llwydyn and Glan Seiont. Residential properties are located along Seiont Mill Road.

3.1.3 The proposal includes a new access onto Waunfawr Road which would allow site traffic to use the haul road and then Waunfawr Road to reach the A487 by travelling to the Caeathro roundabout and on the A4085 either northbound or southbound to junctions with the A487. The Seiont Mill Road access would remain for light traffic and vehicles not suited to the haul road surface.

3.1.4 In the vicinity of the site there are a number of designated sites:

- Pen Y Bont (Seiont Brickworks) Geological Site
- Afon Seiont SSSI, designated for geological exposures
- Four Special Areas of Conservation, designated for habitats and species
- The World Heritage Site of Caernarfon Castle

3.1.5 The possible effects of the development on these sites is explained in later sections of this NTS.

3.2 Planning and policy

3.2.1 The proposal would enable the applicant to meet an identified current demand both for concrete and for aggregates in both the short term and longer term. That market includes construction contracts undertaken by Jones Bros Ltd, particularly those on major infrastructure works for which the local, reliable and uninterrupted supply of concrete is essential. The proposal would continue to provide employment opportunities in Caernarfon and would also support indirect jobs in the local economy.

3.2.2 By providing a site for recycling and for concrete production the proposal would reduce the need for road haulage, making local recycling more feasible and economic and so contributing to the 'proximity principle'. The location of existing suppliers in relation to the proposal site is shown in the Environmental Statement Chapter 3.

4 Summary of environmental effects

4.1 Cultural Heritage

4.1.1 The World Heritage Site of Caernarfon Castle lies 1.3 kilometres to the northwest and the Seiont Quarry site is not visible from the castle. The majority of other heritage sites

considered also have no visibility of the development site and consideration was limited to the tranquillity and change in noise levels of those sites.

4.1.2 Grand Lodge to Glan Gwna Hall is Grade II Listed 'as a well-preserved late C19 lodge of Picturesque style at the former south-western entrance to Glan Gwna Hall'. Bryn Eden and terrace walls to front have Grade II Listing 'as a largely unaltered mid-C19 house, employing a mixed Italianate and Gothic architectural vocabulary, important for the evidence it provides of increasing prosperity in the nearby county town at this time'. Both properties are now private houses. The proposed development site is too far from these properties for any noise effect. Additional HGV traffic on Ffordd Waunfawr and on the haul road was assessed but would not affect the way in which these heritage assets are appreciated from the nearest public spaces.

4.2 Landscape and visual amenity

4.2.1 Plant and the building would be visible from locations within the immediate vicinity, including developed areas of Caernarfon that are to the north and west of the brickworks site. Distant views of high-sided vehicles on the haul road would create have slight negative effects on some parts of the landscape.

4.2.2 Existing barriers such as vegetation would limit views from houses, and where there are existing views of the brickworks site the proposed activities would not change the view significantly. There would be a significant change in the view from Plas Treflan, because the haul road would be seen in front of the bypass embankment.

4.3 Ecology and Nature Conservation

4.3.1 Within a 5 km radius of the application site there are four European sites having features which could be affected by the project:

- Glynllifon SAC (5km distant). Feature(s): Lesser Horseshoe Bat
- Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (1.5km distant). Feature(s): Sandbanks, Mudflats and sandflats, Reefs, Large shallow inlets and bays, Submerged or partially submerged sea caves
- Abermenai to Aberffraw Dunes SAC (4.5km distant). Feature(s): various types of dunes, lakes, transition mires and quaking bogs, Petalwort, Shore dock, Great Crested Newt
- Glannau Mon: Cors Heli SAC UK0020025 (4.5km distant). Feature(s): Estuaries, Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Mudflats and sandflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Spartina swards, Vegetated sea cliffs

4.3.2 A Test of Likely Significant Effects (TLSE) report prepared for these sites concluded that even allowing for the Afon Seiont which flows into the Menai Strait, none of these European sites is close enough to the proposed development for there to be any risk of direct habitat loss or damage.

4.3.3 The ecology study included a review of many earlier records and surveys of the site and surroundings, supported by an updated habitat and species survey. The majority of the proposed development occurs on land previously occupied by hard standing associated with the former brickworks or on previously excavated areas of the quarry. The proposed new

access route largely follows the haul route used during the bypass construction but in places crosses former grazing land in the north-east corner which is within the site boundary.

4.3.4 Protecting the Afon Seiont and riverside corridor habitats is essential to avoid the risk of harm to the species that use it. The developer will achieve that protection by:

- Not carrying out construction work at night, and maintaining a dark corridor along the river
- Using silt controls, settlement lagoons and vegetation to filter any silty run off from the site
- Minimising noise from construction and from operations, particularly when working hours overlap with dusk or darkness when bats and otters would be active
- Additional planting where possible, to buffer the watercourse and existing woodland from any airborne dust
- Lighting only where essential for safety and security, time or movement controlled and designed not to spread onto the woodland or watercourse.

4.3.5 By taking these steps to avoid disturbance or harm, the effect of the development on biodiversity would be slight.

4.4 Noise

4.4.1 A specialist noise team took measurements of the existing ambient and 'background' noise at locations surrounding the former brickworks site, and visited other sites to measure the noise from recycling operations and concrete plant matching those proposed for this site. To reduce the effect of the components and activities which generate the most noise, the applicant has proposed a new building to contain the crushing stage of the recycling operation. Further reduction would come from careful layout of the various plant, positioning the materials stockpiles and walls for maximum screening, and limiting the periods when all machinery would be operating at the same time.

4.4.2 The noise at residential properties and at Ysbyty Eryri is predicted to meet the target of not more than 5dB above the measured background level. The impact of noise would not be significant.

4.4.3 If the proposed electricity generating plant adjoining the development site was required to operate during the working hours of the recycling or concrete batching plant, the combined noise at receptors would be slightly higher than for the recycling and concrete batching alone. This situation is expected to arise rarely, if at all, but would generate an adverse impact at the nearest receptors for the duration of combined operations. A management plan with additional controls, eg on combined operations, would be implemented to avoid this situation.

4.5 Traffic

4.5.1 The continued operation of concrete batching, materials recycling and other proposed activities at the site will generate HGV and light vehicle traffic. The proposal includes the creation of a new permanent vehicular access from Waunfawr Road to serve the site and minimise the continued use of Seiont Mill Road by heavy vehicles.

4.5.2 The proposed operations would, if carried out to the full extent of work applied for, generate an average of 115 HGV movements per working day (12 per hour). That is about half the number that were made during construction of the bypass. Depending on the

source of material, the delivery lorries would use routes towards Caeathro roundabout and then use the A4085 to reach the proposed new site entrance and turn off the public roads. From the entrance they would travel into the quarry, observing the speed limits and other controls set by the site operator.

4.5.3 This amount of additional traffic on Waunfawr Road would create an increase in the noise level of up to 1.5dB in busy periods. This is a minor change and not significant. The change in traffic is below the threshold for considering their effect on air quality, as agreed with the local authority.

4.6 Flood risk and Drainage

4.6.1 The proposal site lies close to the Afon Seiont, and the existing access from Seiont Mill Road crosses the river on a bridge.

4.6.2 Part of the proposed development is located in the more elevated part of the site, outside the zone that could be affected by the most extreme flooding events. No flood risk mitigation is needed for that part of the site.

4.6.3 Updated flood modelling shows that the rest of the site could be affected by shallow flooding in extreme conditions. This area would be used for 'Less vulnerable' elements of the proposal (such as the open storage use). Staff working on site would be able to leave via the haul route, to avoid crossing the river on the bridge. Plant would be securely fixed and not vulnerable to shallow flooding. All materials such as cement which could cause pollution if washed into the river by flooding would be securely stored in sealed silos or containers. Only inert materials for recycling would be stored in the open. The environmental risks from flooding events are therefore low.

4.6.4 Rain falling on the site will continue to drain via shallow infiltration through the aggregate surface, and lateral flow to the existing open ditch at the eastern edge of the former brickworks site. If necessary this ditch will be enlarged to provide additional storage capacity in extreme events. Any works would be carried out in accordance with a design approved by the Sustainable Drainage Systems Approval Body (Gwynedd Council).

4.6.5 The assessment concluded that the proposed development complies with Welsh Government guidance, would not be at unacceptable risk of flooding, and would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

4.7 Water quality

4.7.1 The proposed continuation of operations at the site will not alter the current pattern of drainage nor the quality of surface run off. The silt controls, settlement lagoons and filtration through vegetation noted above will protect the Afon Seiont from pollution in run off.

4.7.2 The site offices and staff welfare accommodation would be connected to mains drainage and services, avoiding the risk of discharges to the River Seiont. Maintenance of plant and equipment within the designated area would be conducted to avoid pollution. Products and materials such as oils, lubricants and cleaning fluids would be stored in secure, bunded facilities in accordance with COSHH requirements. All works involving lubricants, fuels and

other liquids would continue to be conducted under cover within the existing building, using drainage trays and equipment to capture any fluids for proper recycling or disposal.

4.8 Other developments

4.8.1 The bypass is now open to traffic and is considered as forming part of the baseline for the proposal. All effects identified in this assessment are therefore additional to the baseline including the bypass.

4.8.2 If the separate short-term operating reserve ('STOR') plant is developed, and the proposed redevelopment of Peblig Industrial Estate does take place, then there could be combined effects. These were considered, but no significant effects were found. The developments are either too far apart, have different effects, or can be managed to avoid combination effects.

4.9 Risk of disaster

4.9.1 The Planning Authority concluded that there are no major installations in the vicinity of the site that could affect its operations. The operating area and haul route are far enough from the A487 bypass that they would not be affected by possible incidents involving highway traffic. The proposed development would not therefore increase vulnerability or risk from man-made incidents.

4.9.2 The proposed development has a low susceptibility to natural disasters. It would not be vulnerable to flooding disaster and would not increase the risk of disaster to other neighbouring sites.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion to Environmental Statement

5.1.1 The conclusion of the Environmental Assessment is that the design of the site layout and the proposed operating controls would reduce the potential environmental impacts so that no significant environmental effects would remain.

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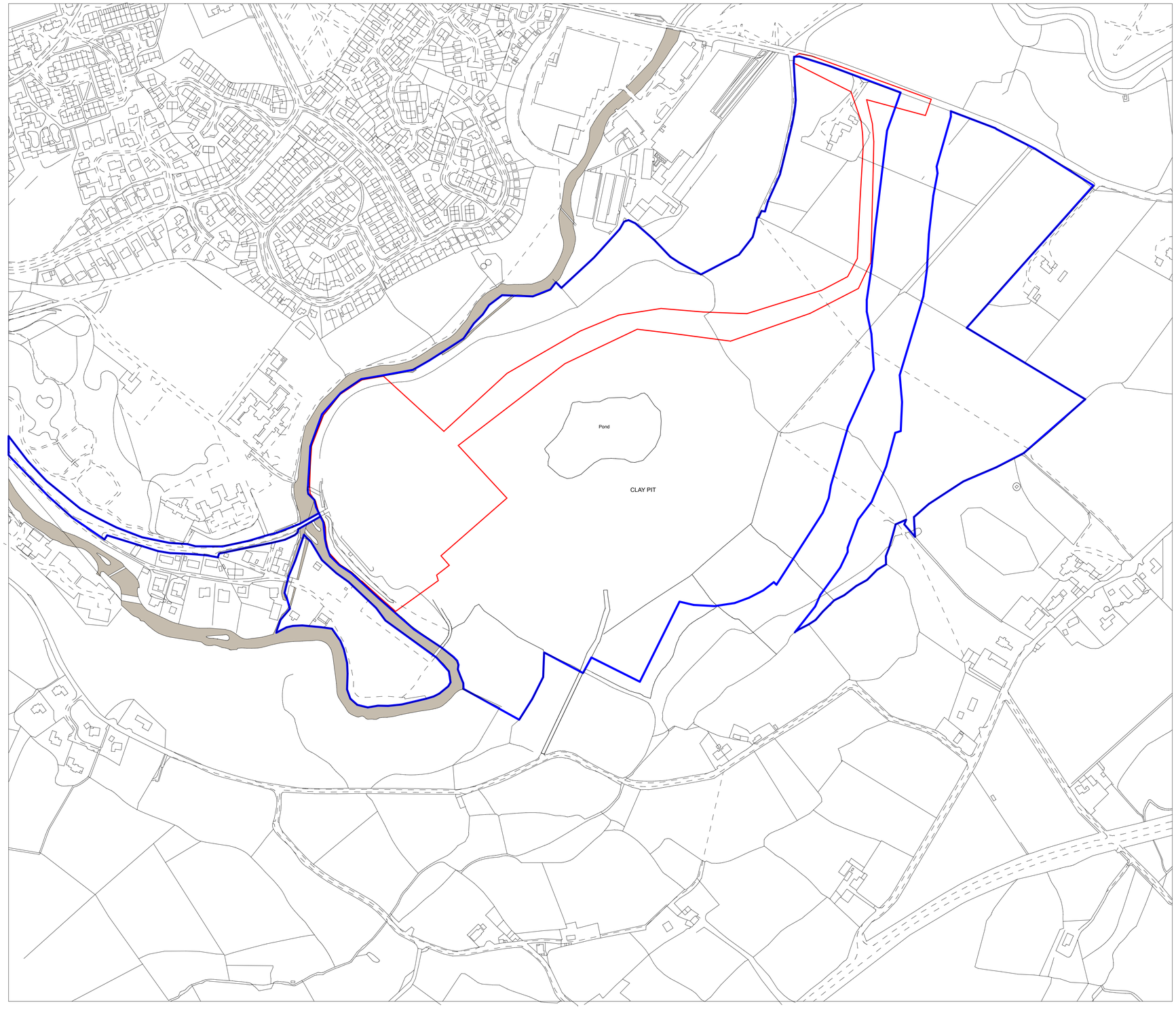

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Site Location

1

B D A

BRIO design + architecture

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Proposed concrete batching and recycling plant

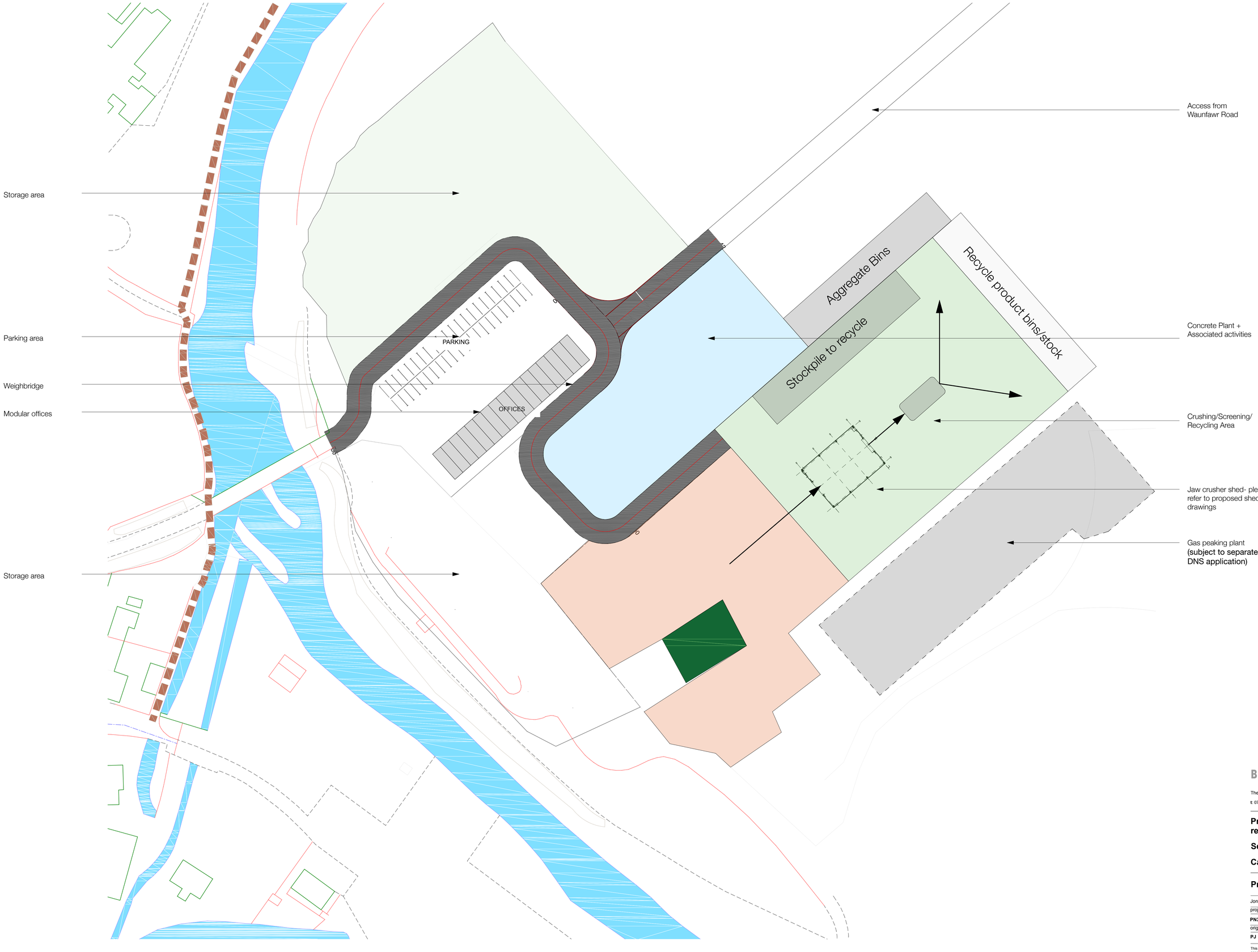
Seiont Quarry

Caernarfon, Gwynedd

Site Location

Jones Bros

project	drawing status	date	
PN324	**Preliminary**	**24/11/2023**	
originator	scale @ A1	number	rev
PJ	**1:2500**	**A.SITE**	



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Proposed Compound Layout

1

B D A

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Proposed concrete batching and recycling plant

Seiont Quarry

Caernarfon, Gwynedd

Proposed Site Compound

Jones Bros

project	drawing status	date	
PN324	**Preliminary**	**05/12/2023**	
originator	scale @ A1	number	rev
PJ	**1:500**	**A.01.01**	