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Modification of Water
Impoundment Facility at
Lisheen Mine, Co. Tipperary

Submitted to: North Tipperary County Council Planning Authority Civic Offices Limerick Road

Nenagh Co. Tipperary NORTH TO PERARY CO. COUNCIL HOLLES

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

General

This Non-Technical Summary and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared in support of an application made by Lisheen Milling Ltd. (Applicant/Lisheen Mine/Lisheen) to North Tipperary County Council (NTCC) for permission to modify the use of a permitted water impoundment facility to store mine tailings at Lisheen Mine, Killoran, County Tipperary. The proposed development, which is the subject of this planning application is summarised as follows:

The development will consist of modification of the permitted water impoundment facility (permitted under An Bord Pleanála Ref. No. PL22.100093 (North Tipperary County Council Reg. Ref. PLC17663)) including use of the facility to provide for the storage and management of mine tailings within the same structure (for the purposes of extending life of mine), and associated capping and reinstatement activities. The proposed development also includes: the installation of spigots and reclaim pumps; and all other ancillary site development works.

Regional and local site location maps have been provided in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 attached. The EIS has been compiled in accordance with statutory requirements and non-statutory guidance on EIS preparation for development projects.

Brief overview of development

The permitted water impoundment facility proposed for modification is located adjoining the existing Tailings Management Facility (TMF). The structure is c. 9.0 hectare (ha.) in size and is accessed via internal haul roads within the Lisheen Mine footprint. It is proposed to place tailings in this structure over a c. 12 month period, and then to cap and restore this this facility in a similar manner to the main TMF, which is currently being capped and restored.

Need for the development

Based on the most up to date estimates, it may be necessary to provide for an additional 12 months of storage for tailings in order to maximise the mine life. Based on this need, to facilitate progressive capping of the main TMF and also to minimise the footprint of the residual development following closure, the ideal solution for this contingency tailings storage is within the permitted water impoundment structure located adjoining the existing TMF. It is further noted that the design of the permitted water impoundment facility is identical in engineering terms to a structure required for the storage of tailings, and therefore suitable for modification activities, which are the subject of this planning application.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

General

The storage and construction volumes of the permitted water impoundment facility are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Storage and Construction Volumes of Permitted Water Impoundment Facility

Final water elevation metres above ordnance datum (mOD)	Crest Elevation mOD	Water and/or Tailings Storage Volumes m ³	Cumulative Months Storage for tailings		
130.5	131.5	c. 390,000	10.7 months		

The plan area of the permitted water impoundment facility at a crest elevation of 131.5 mOD is presented in Figure 2-3. Figure 2.4 depicts the structure once modification activities commence.



The shape of the permitted water impoundment facility is a truncated triangle with a footprint area of approximately 9.0 ha. at a crest elevation of 131.5 mOD. As highlighted previously, the dam wall is designed in a similar manner to the original main TMF design, which incorporates a composite lining system specifically designed to store both water and tailings, and consists of a high density polyethylene (HDPE) geomembrane over a geosynthetic clay liner (GCL).

Operation phase

The new tailings facility will be operated similarly to the existing TMF by discharging the tailings from spigots on the dam crest. The spigots will be opened sequentially and the tailings will be discharged uniformly over the new TMF. When tailings are deposited in the new facility it will be done at a rate of about 3,500 tonnes/day. Once placed, the tailings will have a consolidated density of about 1.9 tonnes/m³ and will thus be filling the facility at a rate of about 1,850 m³/day.

Once modification activities commence, sufficient water will remain in the structure to provide a 0.5-1 metre water buffer and to provide a suction head for the reclaim pumps. The reclaim pumps on the new facility will immediately return tailings water to the reclaim pumps on the main TMF. The pumps will be located in the southern corner of the facility. The main TMF will provide the required retention time for the settling of any dirty tailings water pumped from the adjoining new TMF cell following modification of use.

Sufficient water storage will also be retained in the main TMF to allow for flexibility in the operation and management of surface waters.

Closure Phase

The new cell will be capped with approximately 700 mm of Type B material (limestone or shaley limestone) as constructed on the existing TMF together with 300 mm of growing material consisting of 50% peat and 50% soil. The procedure would be the same as currently undertaken on the existing facility.

The key to long term closure will be the requirement to maintain the cap in a saturated condition. The cap will be initially placed on top of the tailings at 130.5 mOD and the top of the growing medium will be at approximately 131.5 mOD, at the crest elevation. If the mine closes before the tailings reach 130.5 mOD, then the cap will be lower than the crest accordingly.

Details of the closure plan are depicted in Figure 2.8 attached in this Non-Technical Summary.

3.0 HUMAN BEINGS

Land-use and social considerations

Mining and related surface ancillary activities have been undertaken at the property since the late 1990's, and there will be no change to the land use at this location as a result of the proposed modification of the permitted water impoundment facility to store tailings. With respect to social considerations, the modification of the permitted water impoundment facility will result in a positive social outcome, given that the mine will operate for an additional 12 months, which will result in extended employment at the mine facility.

In addition and as highlighted previously, the modification application will facilitate progressive capping works on the main TMF, which again results in a positive outcome from the social viewpoint.

Economic activity

As a result of this proposed development, there will be a direct positive knock-on effect to the wider economy in the vicinity of Lisheen Mine. Approximately 400 employees will maintain employment for an additional 12 months, resulting in continued significant contributions to the public exchequer through tax and universal social payments. In addition, royalties of 3.5% of revenues will also be contributed to the Dept. of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.



Traffic

The proposed modification activities will not give rise to any additional traffic movements during the operation phase, as all tailings will be pumped via pipeline to the permitted water impoundment facility/new TMF cell within the existing mine site. Ancillary traffic relating to closure activities will not impact the public road network. Therefore no impacts from traffic activities will occur.

Mitigation

Given that the Site will operate for an additional 12 months as a result of this application, this will allow Lisheen Mine some additional time to prepare for mine closure. Whilst this application is concerned with keeping the facility open for an extended period, the following activities are being undertaken by Lisheen Mine in the run up to closure:

- Discussions with industrial operators to re-use the plant footprint, surface infrastructure and workforce;
- Capping activities on the main TMF;
- Fisheries / hatchery operations; and
- Playing / leisure facilities post closure.

4.0 ECOLOGY AND WATER

Given that the overall status of both the Drish and Rossesstown Rivers are considered *Poor* and that the Q rating for ecological status is considered *Poor*, it would be important to ensure that the current mine water treatment is in place and operating at full capacity at all stages of the proposed modification development for current and future discharges.

In order to improve and protect the ecological status downstream of Lisheen in both rivers, optimisation of the existing treatment of the water discharging from Lisheen Mine is required and additional treatment is recommended as a precautionary measure specifically in relation to the post closure water discharge. The main mitigation measure to reduce the potential impacts on water quality, to no significance, is the provision of a wetland treatment system which will be agreed with Inland Fisheries, in terms of detailed design and implementation, once formal closure activities commence. The monitoring data from the current wetland treatment system can be used to design the wetland system for closure.

5.0 SOILS AND GEOLOGY

The significance of potential impacts on the receiving soil and geology environment as a result of this proposed modification application are summarised in Table 2 below.





Table 2: Significance of Impacts on Soil and Geology

Attribute	Status	Magnitude of Impact		
Geohazards/Geotechnical	The design of the permitted structure incorporates a composite liner, comprising rockfill and a high density polyethylene liner (Section 2.0). An analysis on slope stability has been undertaken, which demonstrates appropriate factors of safety.	Small adverse		
Geological Heritage	The proposed modification application from storage of water to storage of tailings and water will not have an impact on the integrity of the Derryville Bog complex.	Negligible		
Economic Geology	The proposed modification activities will facilitate the continued extraction of ore from the Lisheen Mine for an additional 12 months.	Major beneficial		
Agricultural Soils	The capping materials proposed for restoration of the new cell will consist of the re-use of excavated peat and glacial till, sourced from stockpiles on the Lisheen Mine site.	Minor beneficial		
Made Ground	The proposed modification application will have no impact on the made ground status of the permitted water impoundment facility.	Negligible		

6.0 WATER

Water is discussed in Section 4.0 of the Non-Technical Summary and Chapter 6.0 of the EIS.

7.0 CLIMATE

Various elements of both the operational and closure phases of the proposed development have the potential to impact on the receiving air and climate. Potential air impacts and associated mitigation measures relating to dust deposition are addressed in Chapter 8.0 (Air).

Emissions from vehicles during the closure phase can add to the receiving air environment. Little or no vehicle movements will be undertaken during the operational phase, as tailings will be transported to the application site via pipeline. It is anticipated that the capping works on the Application Site will have an expected duration of approximately four months. During this period, the following mitigation measures will be put in place to limit vehicle and plant emissions:

- No vehicles or plant will be left idling unnecessarily;
- Vehicles and plant will be well maintained;
- Engines and exhaust systems will be regularly serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- All vehicles will hold a current Department of Environment certificate where required; and
- Queuing or parking of vehicles outside the site, both during and before the site opens.



Growth media (peat and soil) will primarily be sourced from stockpiles adjoining the permitted water impoundment facility. Rockfill material will also be sourced locally to help reduce any associated carbon footorint.

The adoption of these mitigation measures will ensure that the resulting impact significance is no greater than slight.

8.0 AIR

Recorded dust (general particulate) values at the closest residential receptors for the assessment period 2008 to 2012 generally remained at or below the IPPCL limit of 150 mg/m²/day.

An assessment of very fine particulate dust (PM10) and metals in dust was also undertaken. Results indicated that there were no exceedences outside of the Lisheen Mine site for the relevant assessment years.

Based on the above findings, the potential for significant adverse impacts to local air quality as a result of emissions from tailings placement and subsequent capping activities is low, as the separation distance between the source and the nearest receptors is considered to be sufficient. Consequently, impacts to local air quality are considered not significant.

9.0 NOISE

Existing baseline reports of the noise environment at Lisheen Mine between 2008 and 2012 demonstrate that the operational phase can operate within relevant EPA guidance and licence limits (55 dB LAeq).

During the operational phase, the noise level due to the proposed pump will be at least 10 dB below the existing ambient level at the nearest NSRs, and will therefore be inaudible. The noise impact during this phase is therefore considered to be not significant.

During the capping/closure phase, the predicted noise level of 53 dB LAeq meets the agreed daytime noise limit of 55 dB with 2 dB of 'headroom'. The will be no capping activities during the night-time period, resulting in the 45 dB noise limit also being met. The impact of noise from the capping/closure phase is therefore considered to be not significant.

Noise mitigation measures will be incorporated into the Site design, management and working practices. Through implementation of the following mitigation measures it is considered that the operational and capping activities will have no impact at nearby NSRs.

- All haul roads to be kept clean and maintained in a good state of repair;
- Heavy goods vehicles entering and leaving the site will have tailgates securely fastened;
- Plant will be operated in a proper manner with respect to minimising noise emissions;
- Plant will be subject to regular maintenance; and
- Plant will be fitted with effective exhaust silencers, and maintained in good working order.

10.0 LANDSCAPE

The crest height of the permitted water impoundment structure is 131.5 mOD and the maximum height of the tailings as a result of its modification will reach 130.5 mOD. It is noted that all of the surrounding visual receptors are located more than 10 m below the crest height at the prevailing ground level, and views into the impoundment structure are not afforded. Thus, the tailings material will not be visible above the crest of



the permitted impoundment structure and there will be no additional visual effects arising at surrounding receptors as a result of the proposed modification activities.

11.0 MATERIAL ASSETS: ARCHAEOLOGY AND UTILITIES

Archaeology

The permitted water impoundment facility is currently permitted under Planning Permission Ref. No. PCL17663 and ABP ref. No. PL22.100093. Given that the structure is permitted, an Archaeology Impact Assessment was screened out of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Notwithstanding this, additional information is provided in the EIS on the context of the permitted water impoundment facility in terms of its archaeological and cultural heritage setting. This information was previously submitted to NTCC in a document entitled 'Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report' submitted on 17 May 2013.

The Department of Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht subsequently issued licences to commence preservation by record works at the permitted water impoundment facility. These preservation works commenced in June 2013 and a copy of the Archaeological Report on these excavations will be forwarded to the Planning Authority once completed.

Utilities

A wind turbine owned and operated by Bord Gáis Energy (BGE) is located in the vicinity of the Application Site. This wind turbine is c. 3.0 megawatt and was constructed in c. 2008. The location of the wind turbine is depicted in Figure 2.2 attached.

Detailed consultations were undertaken with BGE regarding the permitted water impoundment facility. During these consultations, the following potential issues were identified and discussed:

- Maintenance access to turbine blades during operation and closure of the modified structure;
- Protection of underground services during any site works;
- Dust monitoring during operation and closure phases of proposed modification activities; and
- Potential vibration effects of plant movements during closure activities.

As a result, the following mitigation measures were agreed by BGE and Lisheen Mine;

- Design Risk Assessment and Preliminary Health and Safety Plan to be provided to BGE;
- Lisheen Mine to provide access for maintenance of turbine;
- Design and constructability reviews to be undertaken with the contractors;
- Vibration monitoring to be undertaken during any works;
- Full review of underground cables and action plan to protect these utilities;
- Dust monitoring, including liaison with Vestas, (turbine manufacturer); and
- Appropriate site fencing.

Once the above mitigation measures are adopted, it is expected that residual impacts due to the operational and closure phases of the project on Utilities in the vicinity of the Application Site will be slight to imperceptible.



12.0 CLOSURE, RESTORATION AND AFTERCARE

Provisions for the planned closure of the mine were initially identified in the original planning application at Lisheen in 1996/1997. Lisheen Mine has subsequently updated the Closure Restoration and Aftercare Management Plan (CRAMP) in 2009 and again in 2013, in accordance with their planning permissions and licences for the Site.

The consequences of implementing the proposed modification activities at the permitted water impoundment facility in the context of the current CRAMP are reviewed in Chapter 12.0 of the EIS. This Chapter supports the view that the proposed modification activities will have no adverse effect on arrangements for progressive mine closure described within the Lisheen CRAMP.

13.0 INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

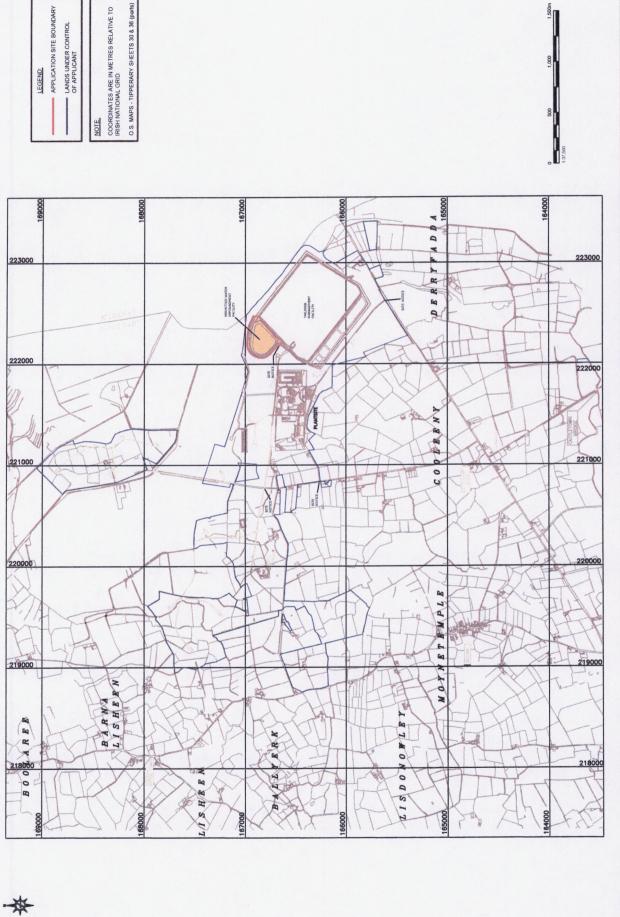
Interactions/inter-relationships between various aspects of the environmental impact assessment for the proposed modification activities at the Application Site, including both operation and closure phases are addressed in Chapter 13.0 of the EIS.





FIGURES



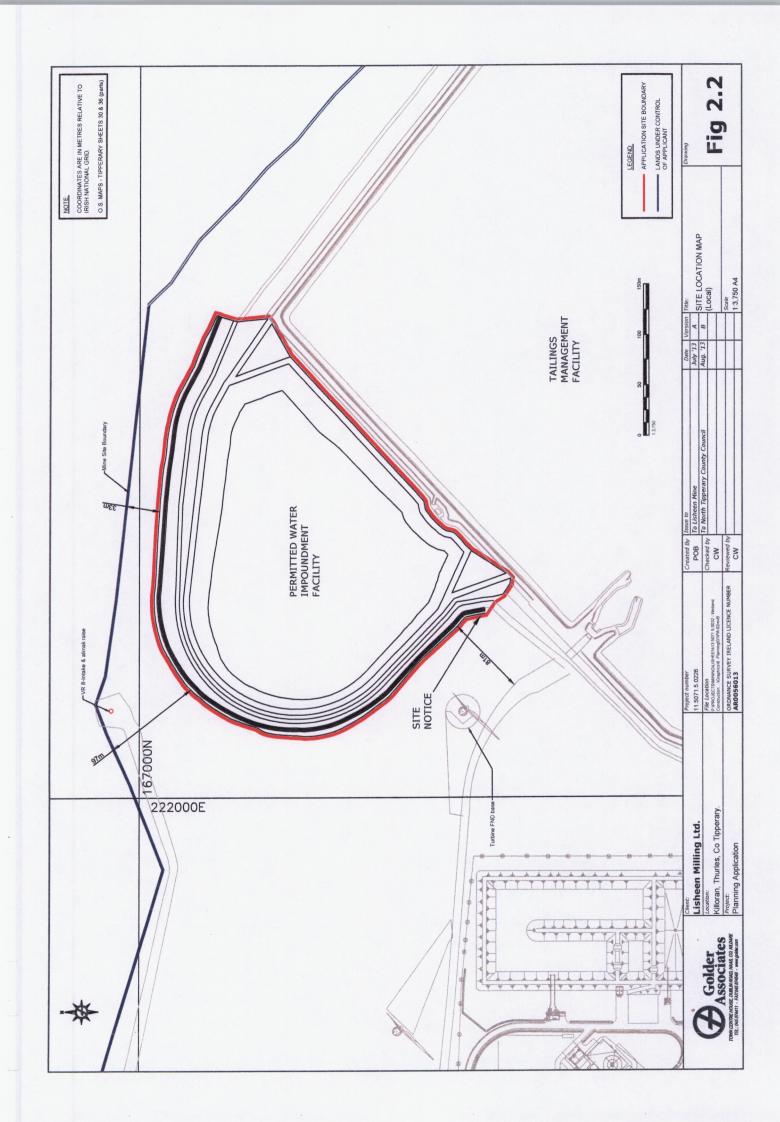


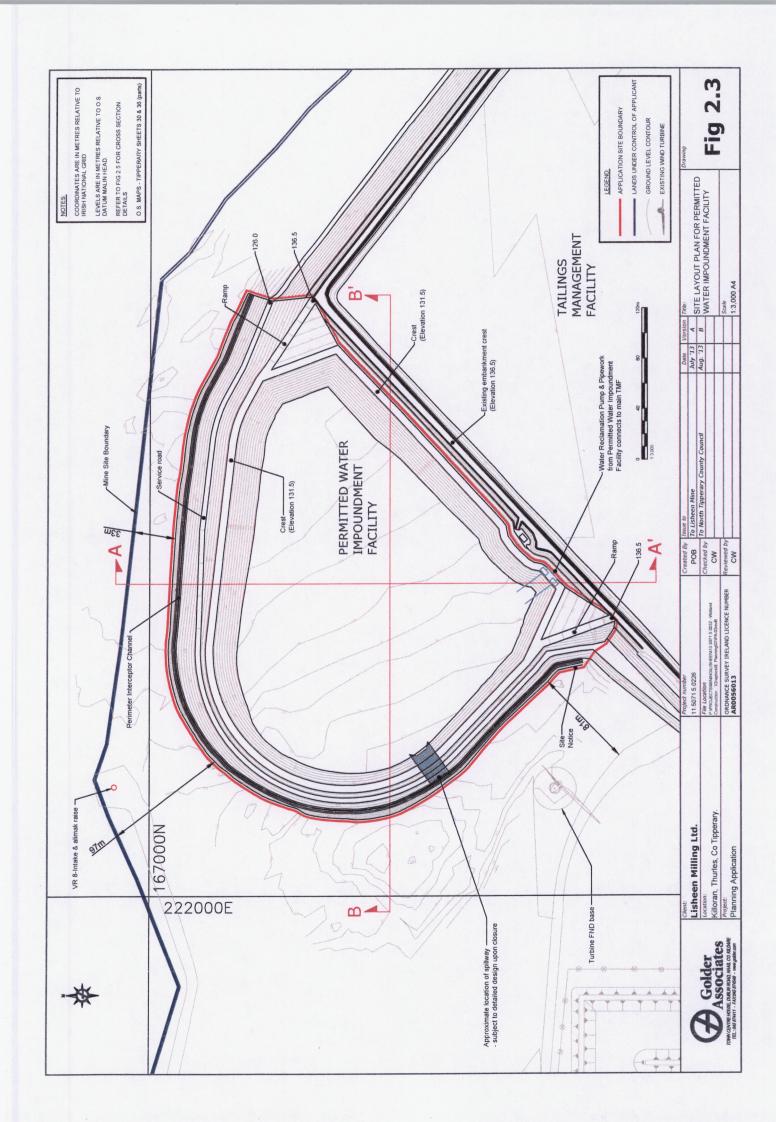
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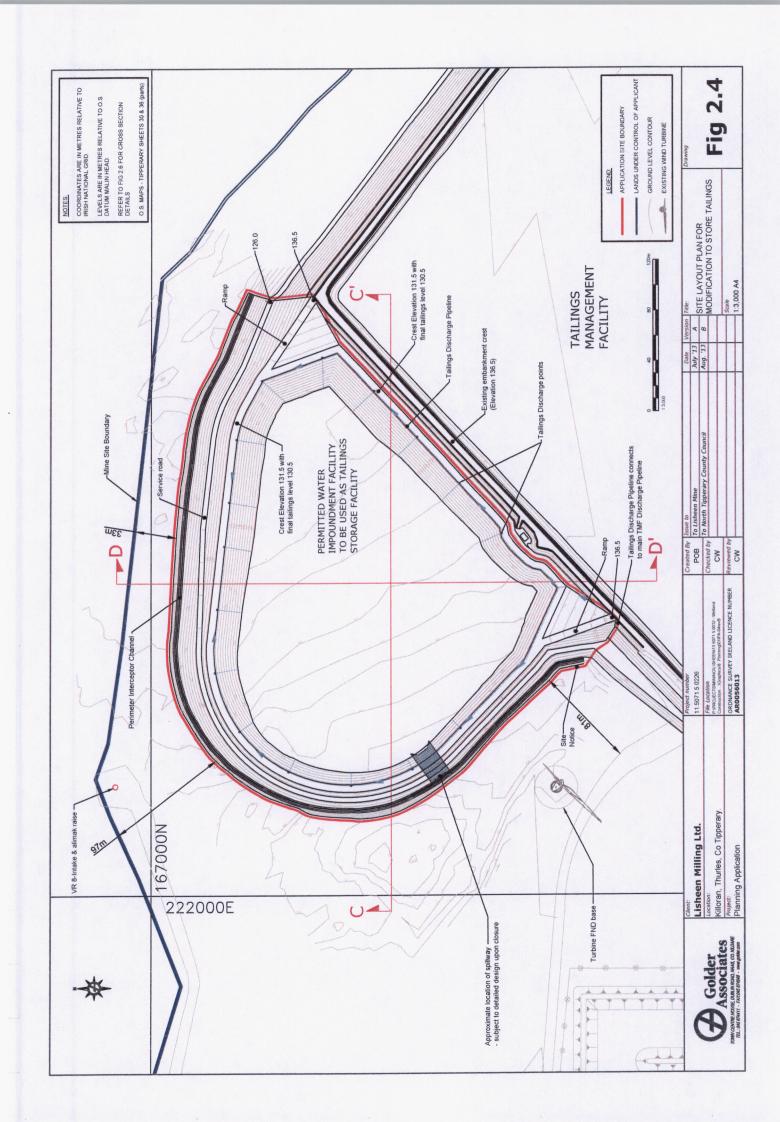
 July '13
 A
 SITE LOCATION MAP

 Aug. '13
 B
 (Regional)
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To Lisheen Mine
To North Tipperary County Council Created By POB CW CW viewed by CW File Location
Construction States Plannaguith 5002-Weised
Construction States Plannaguith Olive
ORDINANCE SURVEY IRELAND LICENCE NUMBER
AR0056013 Project number 11.5071.5.0226 Client:
Lisheen Milling Ltd.
Loorien:
Loorien:
Killoran, Thurles, Co Tipperary.
Project:
Planning Application

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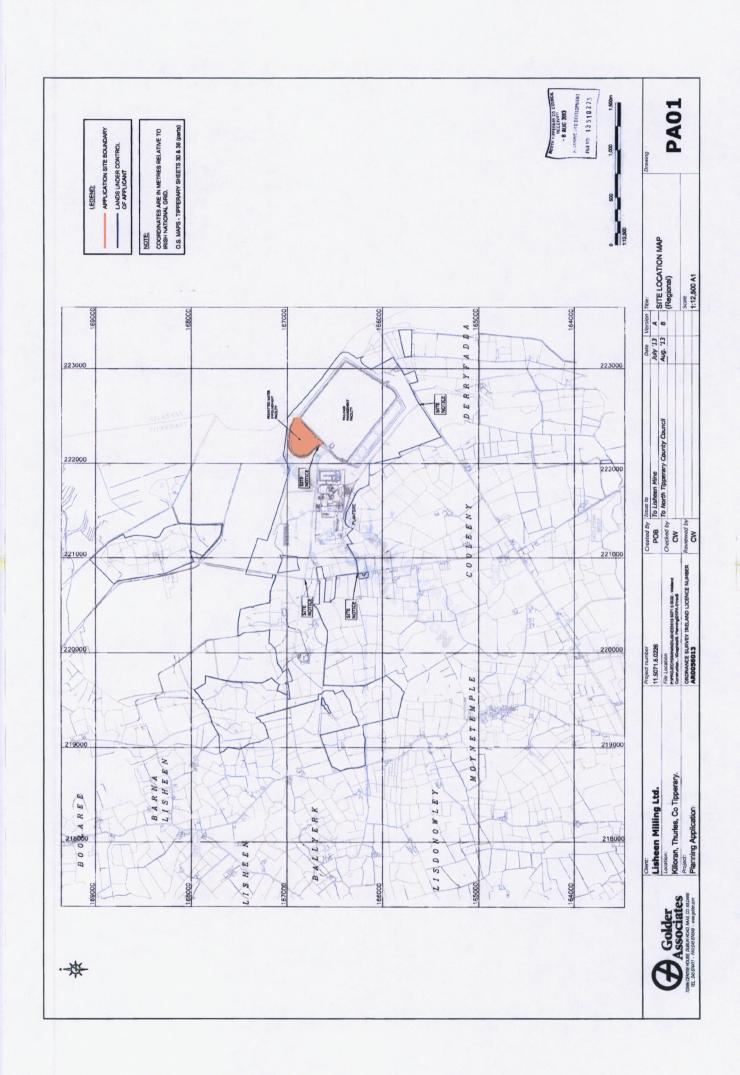
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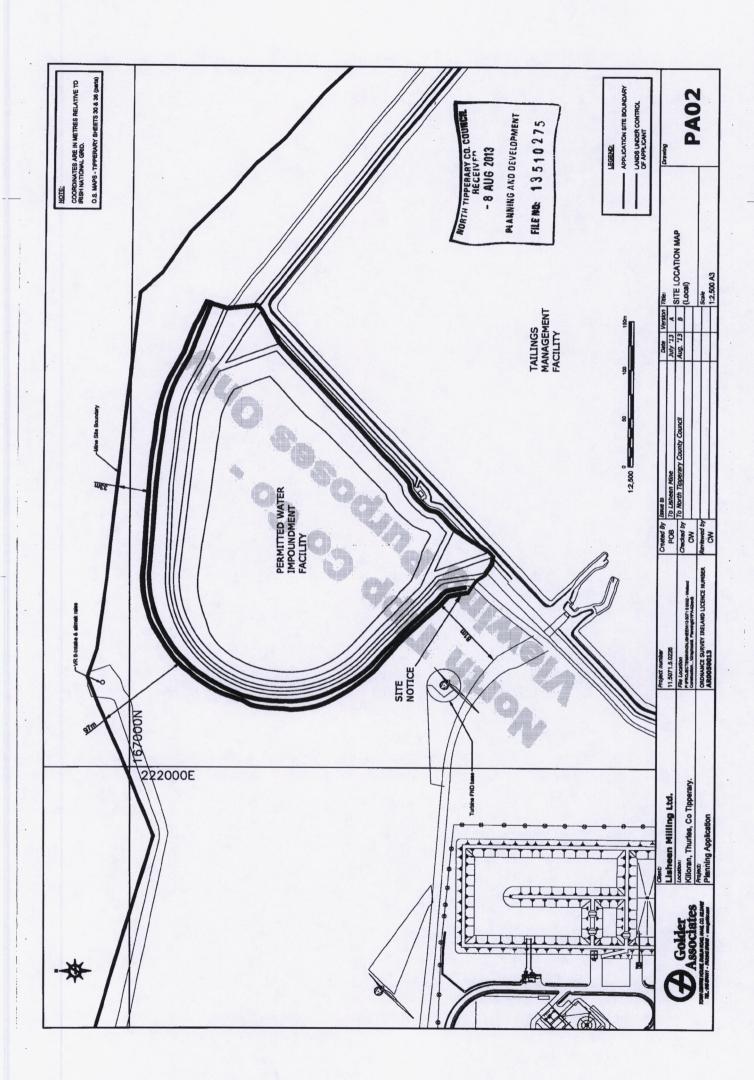
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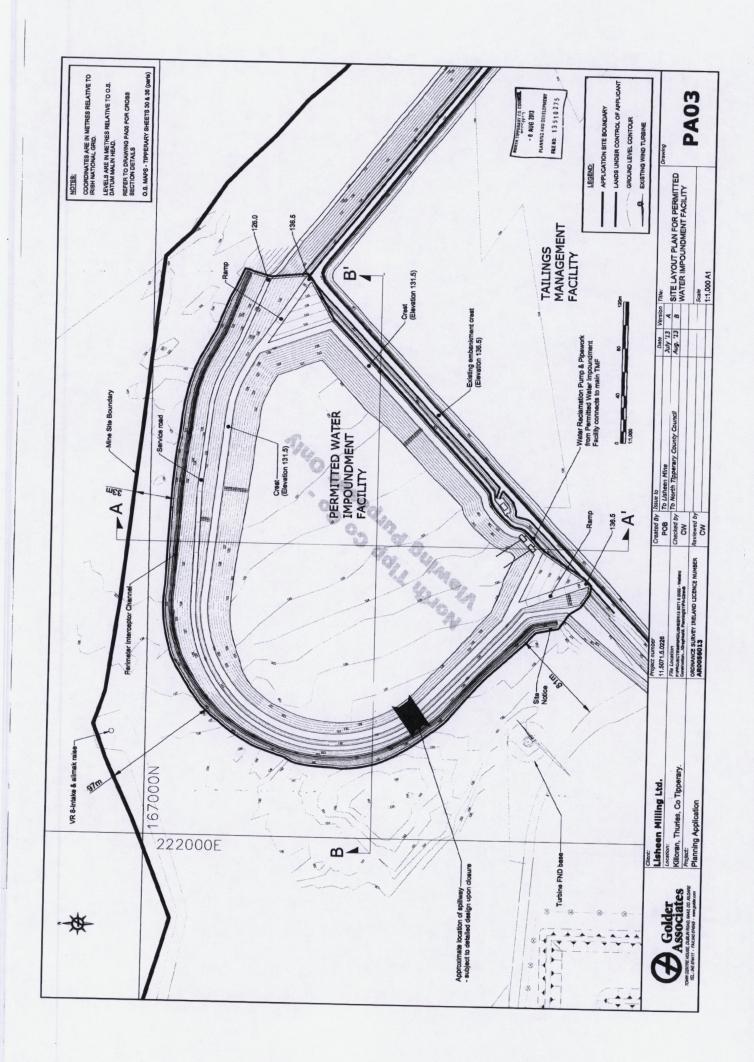
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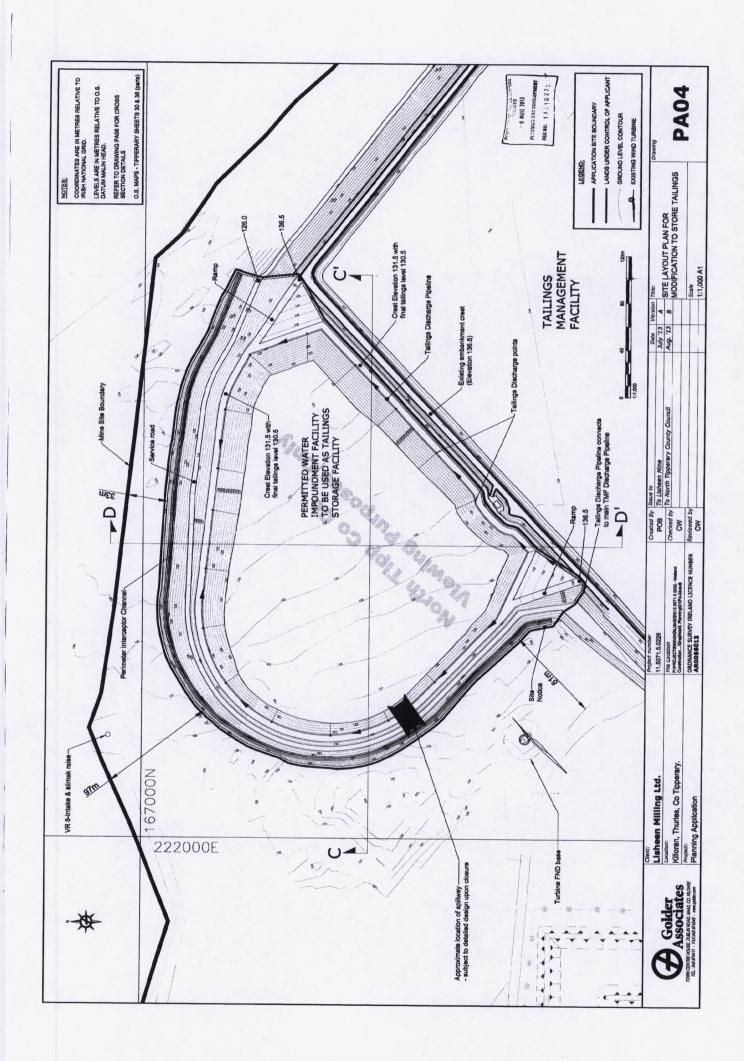
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						PORTS COURCE.	- 8 AUG 2013 PARWAS AND ESPEROPMENT FRENC: 13510275	55 120m	Drawing	PA05	
Detum 180.00mAOD	131,50m Datum 140.00mAOD	Detum 100.00mAOD South		Datum 190.00mAOD	131,50m 140.00mAOD		400m 450	0001:1	Date Version Title: Date Version Title: Date Version Title: Aug. '1:3 B SECTIONS A-A' & B-B'	(See Drawing PAUS for section locations)	1:1,000 A1
	130,50m (Water Level)	200 250 350	03 03	V12 4		, 11	250 300 350		Created By Issue to POB To Lishean Mine POB To Anne Mine	Checked by Community CW Cave Cave Cave Cave Cave Cave Cave Cave	MBER KEVIEWED UP
	131.50m	100					100 150 200		Project number 11.5071.5.0226	File Location PrypoleCTS-VAINING/LISHEBN 13 907 1 5 0032 - Wee Construction/Graphica/N. Planning/011/9405 & PA066	ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND LICENCE NUT AR0056013
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