Firm wants to search for tin at beauty spot

The county planners have put off making a decision on a proposal to prospect for tin in one of the last wildernesses of Cornwall, but have given permission for prospecting to continue for lead, zinc and silver at St. Kew.

Geovor Tin Mines Ltd. want permission to prospect down a three and a half miles length of the Willy Brook. They want to start half a mile from Minions village, and follow the river down to Trewartha Marek. The area includes some of the most interesting geological phenomena in Cornwall and has been designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value and Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The valley contains many ancient monuments, and Geovor's proposals would disturb the remains of many of them. In fact, the famous Heas of Trewethall, three stone circles, is within a few hundred yards of the company's suggested starting point near Minions.

PROTESTS

The proposals have aroused a storm of protest against the plans. Geovor's neighbour, the Cornwall County Councillor for Altarnum, who spent much of his early life in the area, said at Monday's county planning committee that the objections were justified.

Geovor Tin Mines is suggesting prospecting in three stages, starting with 31 holes to a depth of four feet, a second stage of 54 holes to be deepened to 20 feet for the next three years. The company's exploration for tin or any other minerals would then be left to the day of a decision. Geovor has received permission for prospecting at two other places in the county.

CONSULTATION

The council, for instance, is strongly against it and is specially concerned about possible pollution of the water.

IN FAVOUR

On the other hand, St. Cleer Parish Council is in favour of the application. North Hill Parish Council says it has no views, and North Cornwall District Council thinks three years' permission for prospecting should be given.

Cornwall Naturalists Trust is objecting because of the great scientific interest of the area. The Archaeological Society objects to any scheme which might damage sites.

Cornwall Committee for the Protection of Archaeological Sites urges the county council to carry out a detailed survey of the valley at its own expense.

The archaeological committee is willing, however, to consider some help from Geovor in excavating and surveying if it can be assured the damage is not going to be done.

There are also fears that the prospecting should reveal china clay deposits, and that the mining company might be tempted to pass on the information to china clay interests.

In the meantime, the county planning committee is waiting to hear what the South West Water Authority has to say on the subject of water pollution.

When the Authority's comments have been received the whole matter will come before the planning committee again, with all the objections listed for consideration.

Local residents are also worried about possible pollution of the water, and about the effect of heavy lorries loaded with ore travelling on the narrow moorland roads.

ST. KEW MINE

Planning permission has been given for prospecting to continue at the derelict Trewethall Mine at St. Kew in a search for lead, zinc and silver.

The permission was first given for three years in 1971, and it expires on March 8. Mr. H. St. Louis-Cookes has now been told a further two and a half years. His permission can be extended for two periods of two years.

The application was made by Two Residents, Col. G. B. Brown, of Wattersgate, Trellis, and T. Blewett, of Pengenna Farm, St. Kew, have objected, but North Cornwall Council supports the application provided water supplies be safeguarded.

Conditions include no buildings or machinery to be erected without the county council granting the authority's permission, and work to be permitted only between 7 a.m. and 12 noon on weekdays and no work at all on Sundays.