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PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE – 15 FEBRUARY 2010

PLANNING APPLICATION TO EXTEND MINERAL EXTRACTION AND ALTER SCHEME OF WORKING AND RESTORATION AT GREAT TEW BROWN IRONSTONE QUARRY. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES THE INSTALLATION OF A STONE SAW SHED, MODIFICATION AND RETENTION OF A SCREENING LANDFORM AND EXTENSION OF THE FARM SITE AT THE QUARRY FARM SITE. APPROVAL IS ALSO SOUGHT FOR MINOR CHANGES TO THE BUILT GRAIN STORE DEVELOPMENT AND TO CONSOLIDATE HISTORIC PERMISSIONS. GREAT TEW QUARRY, OXFORDSHIRE

Report by Head of Sustainable Development

Location: Great Tew Quarry, Butchers Hill, Great Tew

Applicant: Great Tew Farms, The Estate Office, Great Tew

Application No: 09/1328/P/CM

District Council Area: West Oxfordshire

Introduction

1. Great Tew Quarry has planning permission to extract 24,500 tonnes per annum of brown ironstone. In 2009 the applicant was given planning permission to erect three agricultural buildings on part of the site. The applicant is proposing to extend an area of mineral extraction within the existing quarry boundary to create a development platform for two further agricultural buildings that would house livestock. The applicant is also proposing to erect a stone saw shed on the quarry floor to enable hand stone processing to take place at the site.

Location

2. The Great Tew Estate covers a large area north of Enstone. The quarry site is approximately 3km south of the A361, and 500 metres north west of the village of Great Tew. Access to the Great Tew Quarry is directly off the B4022.

The Site and Its Setting

3. The application site is located on treed and wooded slopes of a small valley that drains into the River Cherwell some 14km east of the site. There are a number of woodland areas nearby, with a small group of trees adjoining the western margin of the current working and the eastern boundary of the site. Agricultural land lies to the north of the site.
4. Great Tew Quarry is well screened by mature vegetation and it is set back some distance from the B4022. The access also serves the adjacent fields. The closest dwellings are located approximately 300 metres to the south east of the quarry. The quarry site covers an area of 8.7Ha.
5. Soils and overburden have been used to form screening landforms to the north of the quarry. An amenity bund has been formed more recently along the south eastern field boundary.
6. The Great Tew Estate farm unit consists of Court Farm, Tracey Farm and Leys Farm.

Background Information and History

Great Tew Quarry

7. Great Tew quarry is an historical site and has been in periodic operation for over four hundred years. The quarry was re-opened in the 1990's. In 2001 planning permission no.: W2001/1396 was granted for the extraction of brown ironstone at Great Tew quarry. In 2004 further permission was issued for the installation of a portable weighbridge and containerised office.
8. Due to increasing demand for brown ironstone, particularly for historic restoration projects, an application was submitted to extend the quarry. Permission was issued on 17 November 2005 under permission no.: 05/1352/P/CM. This allowed the quarry to produce 12,000 tonnes of stone per annum.
9. Demand has continued to rise since this permission was granted, and in 2007 the site was producing 14,285 tonnes of dimension stone and had begun to diversify into building and walling stone.
10. Planning permission no: 08/01560/P/CM was issued on 25 November 2008 which allowed the crushing and exportation of up to 8,000 tonnes per annum of aggregate for use on internal farm roads within the Great Tew Estate.
11. A further planning permission (ref.: 08/1590/CM) was granted on 06 March 2009 which allowed an increase in the annual output of mineral to 24,500 tonnes. This planning permission also involved a small extension to the site known as Phase 1C.

Estate Farm Unit

12. The Estate Farm Unit farms approximately 3,500 acres of land within the Estate. The Unit is made up of three farms: Court Farm, Tracey Farm and Leys Farm.
13. The last investment into the farming operation was at Court Farm in 1968. Currently there is concern that the farm business is restricted by an inefficient and costly system that utilises elderly and environmentally unfriendly buildings and suffers from double or triple handling of materials.
14. The Great Tew Estate is seeking a comprehensive solution to improve the agricultural business over the next 50 years. The first stage of this was given planning permission on 06 March 2009 (ref.:08/1590/CM) and allowed a new grain building, a new workshop and machinery store and multipurpose building to be erected within the quarry site but also required the removal of the existing Court Farm buildings within 18 months of the completion of the new buildings.

Details of the Development

15. There are three aspects to the present proposal: i) erection of livestock farm buildings ii) extension to mineral working and restoration iii) installation of a stone saw shed.

Livestock Farm Buildings

16. The applicant has commissioned a review of farm operations after entering into a 10 year legal agreement with Natural England to create a large-scale Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship (ELS/HLS) scheme which involves detailed management of the grassland through grazing and cutting to benefit local flora and fauna.
17. At present two farm units within the Great Tew Estate are used for livestock operations. These are at Tracey Farm and Court Farm. Under planning permission 08/1590/CM Court Farm is to cease operation. The proposal states that the following matters represent shortcomings in the operation of the farms for livestock operation:
 - The buildings on Tracey Farm are of insufficient size to accommodate the finishing cattle and breeding bulls as well as cows and calves.
 - The Tracey Farm site cannot accommodate expansion of the existing buildings and there are listed buildings on the site.
 - Scope for increasing the number and quality of livestock is limited by the closure of Court Farm.
18. There are two new agricultural buildings proposed:
 - Cattle over-wintering and feeding building: 55.07m (l) x 31.58m (w) x 15.54m (h)

- Sheep and lambing building: 61.16m (l) x 31.58m (w) x 15.54m (h).
19. The proposal anticipates that these buildings would be constructed during Phase 1C and Phase 4 extraction and/or during the site preparation works for Phase 2. The area of Phase 4 would form the development platform for the proposed buildings which would be approximately 4.6m below the existing grain store yard when extraction is completed. The applicant states that this would mean that the new buildings would sit between 1.0 metre and 3.85 metres lower than those already built. The applicant is proposing to use dark green colours for the walls and mid-grey for the roof to match the existing buildings.
 20. The new buildings would be accessed by a ramp that would extend the existing access arrangements. The ramp would be 10m wide with safety barriers on either side and constructed to a gradient of 1:10. The ramp would be surfaced with concrete.

Extension to Mineral Working

21. The applicant is proposing to extend the area of mineral extraction known as Phase 4 within the quarry site. This area is in the centre of mineral extraction and so there are no proposals to extend the external boundary of the site. The applicant states that the extension would provide a suitable platform for the erection of the livestock farm buildings detailed above.
22. Current working on-site is taking place within Phase 1C. Initial works would involve the stripping of the remaining topsoil from Phase 1C and stored along the southern boundary. Topsoil would be stripped from the Phase 4 extension area and from the existing western screening bund which is to be removed under planning permission 08/02113/CM. The proposal would involve the working of Phase 4 alongside Phase 1C.
23. It is proposed to extend Phase 4 northwards by 0.68Ha into an area currently occupied by waste stone materials and the western screening bund which is due to be removed under consent 08/1590/CM and used to form the final quarry restoration sloped. This material is instead proposed to be stored in a temporary bund as part of this proposal that would form a northern profiling screening bund. The maximum height of the bund would remain at 164m A.O.D. The waste stone would be used in quarry restoration.
24. The applicant states that the additional working area would provide an estimated 15,240 tonnes of saleable mineral that would produce a total yield of approximately 140,090 tonnes of remaining mineral from the whole site. Extraction of mineral would be to the same level as the current quarry floor.
25. Mineral working would move into Phase 2 upon completion of Phase 1C. At this time progressive restoration of Phases 1A-C would take place. Mineral extraction would conclude in Phase 3.

26. Proposed final restoration is to a mixture of woodland on the northern and eastern screening bunds, treed pasture on the southern slopes of the quarry, wet grassland and scrub on the quarry floor. The agricultural units and screening landforms would be retained under this scheme and planted with woodland.

Installation of a Stone Saw Shed

27. The proposal involves the erection of a stone sawing shed. At present all dimension stone is exported from the site for processing. The application states that there is a demand for dimension stone products and that this can be addressed through the current proposals.
28. The applicant states that the stone saw shed would be installed across the boundary of Phases 1A and 1B on the quarry floor. It would be erected during extraction of Phase 2 and would utilise the existing quarry access. The saw shed would have dimensions of 30.6 (length) x 18.0m (width) x 15.54m (height) and would be of steel frame construction with profiled steel cladding to match existing buildings on the site. The applicant is proposing to use dark green colours for the walls and mid-grey for the roof to match the existing buildings.
29. The proposed stone saw shed would be removed when quarry operations cease.

Consultation Responses

30. Great Tew Parish Council - No response received.
31. Little Tew Parish Council - No response received.
32. Oxford Geology Trust - No response received.
33. Natural England - No objection. The application may provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancements. The Council should consider securing measures to enhance biodiversity of the site from the applicant if minded to grant planning permission in accordance with paragraph 14 of PPS9.
34. Environment Agency - The proposed development will only be acceptable if the following measure(s) are implemented and secured by way of a planning condition on any planning permission
35. Surface water from industrial/farm activities could contain elevated levels of contaminants. The applicant must demonstrate that any surface water run off does not pose a risk to controlled waters. Infiltration drainage through any area which may have elevated levels of contaminants (e.g. made ground) could mobilise contamination. The applicant must demonstrate that any infiltration area is not contaminated.

36. The condition should require the submission of a surface water disposal scheme and subsequent approval prior to the commencement of development.

37. West Oxfordshire District Council - Environmental Protection Officer:

First Response

38. Concerns regarding the potential noise impact from the proposed stone sawing shed. Clarification is sought on the applicants comments that "...and continued noise monitoring under the current regime".

Second Response

39. Clarification of the current noise monitoring was sent to the Environmental Protection Officer. Concerns are still raised regarding the impact of noise and therefore the Environmental Protection Officer objects to the proposal.

Final Response

40. The applicant submitted technical noise reports relating to the proposed stone sawing shed to the Environmental Protection Officer who is satisfied that the stone sawing shed would not have a detrimental impact on amenity and has now withdrawn their objection.

West Oxfordshire District Council - Planning:

41. No objection subject to the imposition of the following condition:

- That the proposed barns shall be constructed of materials to match the existing barns on the site in order to protect the interests of the character and appearance of the wider area (Policy BE2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011).

Transport Development Control - No objection.

42. Any intensification of the site would be small in transport terms and would not impact on the local highway. Any existing transport obligations would need renewal or re-application if planning permission is given.

County Ecologist

First Response

43. Further information is required as protected species surveys are only valid for 12 months. The applicant should submit:

- Extended Phase 1 habitat survey
- Protected species walk-over survey

- Updated badger and bat survey as potential habitat for them has previously been identified. Particularly to survey any trees planned to be removed as part of this application for their potential to be bat roosts and to recommend mitigation & enhancement.
44. All ecological reports should include the following:
- (a) What biodiversity is present.
 - (b) How biodiversity impacts can be avoided
 - (c) If it is not possible to avoid impacts, how they can be mitigated
 - (d) If there is no way of mitigating impacts, compensation measures should be identified
 - (e) How the application can result in overall enhancement in biodiversity
45. If the new proposals will affect the approved restoration scheme then the applicant should submit a revised restoration scheme.
46. Where additional planting has been proposed as part of a planning application, a planting scheme should be included. This should cover:
- Species mix (species should be of local provenance and appropriate to the local area)
 - Plant size
 - Planting layout
 - Planting spacing
 - Methods of establishment

Second Response

47. The applicant has submitted information pursuant to the initial comments of the County Ecologist.
48. No objections subject to the imposition of the following conditions. The updated protected species reports are sufficient.
- (i) A badger survey is carried out annually in September, October or November.
 - (ii) The removal of trees 30 and 38 (as shown on drawing D4 Updated Bat Roost Survey in 'Updated Wildlife Survey 2009' by Philip Parker Associates) shall not take place unless the protocol outlined in section 3.5 of the 'Updated Wildlife Survey 2009' by Philip Parker Associates is followed. Trees 30 and 38 shall not be removed except during September, October, March or April.
 - (iii) Protected species surveys are valid for 12 months so if the trees are planned to be removed after 2010 then the bat survey will need to be updated.

- (iv) If any bats are found at any point, all work should cease immediately. Work should not recommence until a full survey has been carried out, a mitigation strategy prepared and licence obtained (if necessary) in discussion and agreement with Natural England.
- (v) The trees shall not be removed except in September to February (inclusive) as this is outside of the bird breeding season. If any trees need to be removed between March and August (inclusive), they will need to be checked over by an ecological consultant immediately prior to removal to ensure there are no nesting birds present. If nesting birds are present, the tree must be cordoned off and protected and cannot be removed until the birds have fledged.
- (vi) A detailed landscape scheme will be submitted to the planning authority within 6 months of permission being issued. The planting scheme should cover:
 - Species mix (species should be of local provenance and appropriate to the local area)
 - Plant sizes
 - Planting layout
 - Planting spacing
 - Methods of establishment

49. County Forester - No adverse comments. The new building would sit well in the landscape and the two proposed woodland plantings would enhance what is present.

Third Party Representations

50. One representation has been received raising the following concerns:
- Recent developments are out of character with rolling wooded landscape. The proposals would add to this impact and be contrary to West Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy NE3.
 - The mineral seam should be conserved for future generations due to its scarcity.
 - The proposal would increase carbon emissions due to the intensive use of diesel-engine plant. Substantial working should wait for more energy-efficient technologies.

Relevant Development Plan and other Policies

51. The main policy considerations are i) impact of the agricultural buildings upon the local landscape ii) impact of the quarry proposals iii) ecology and iv) impact on local amenity.

(i) Impact of the agricultural buildings upon the local landscape

52. Regional Spatial Strategy of the South East (SE Plan) policy C4 states that outside nationally designated landscapes, positive and high quality management of the regions open countryside will be encouraged and supported by local authorities and other organisations, agencies, land managers, the private sector and local communities, through a combination of planning policies, grant aid and other measures.
53. This policy further states that planning authorities and other agencies in their plans and programmes should recognise, and aim to protect and enhance, the diversity and local distinctiveness of the region's landscape, informed by landscape character assessment. Local authorities should develop criteria-based policies to ensure that all development respects and enhances local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided.
54. SE Plan policy CC6 states that actions and decisions associated with the development and use of land will actively promote the creation of sustainable and distinctive communities. This will be achieved by developing and implementing a local shared vision which:
- (i) Respects, and where appropriate enhances, the character and distinctiveness of settlements and landscapes throughout the region
 - (ii) Uses innovative design processes to create a high quality built environment which promotes a sense of place. This will include consideration of accessibility, social inclusion, the need for environmentally sensitive development and crime reduction.
55. West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (WOLP) policy NE1 states that proposals for development in the countryside should maintain or enhance the value of the countryside for its own sake: its beauty, its local character and distinctiveness, the diversity of its natural resources, and its ecological, agricultural, cultural and outdoor recreational values. Furthermore, Policy NE3 states that development will not be permitted if it would harm the local landscape character of the District. Proposals should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the individual landscape types.
56. WOLP policy BE2 sets out a number of criteria for which development proposals should comply with. Those relevant to this development include:
- Proposals for new buildings and land uses should clearly demonstrate how they will relate satisfactorily to the site and the surroundings.
 - In the open countryside, any appropriate development will be easily assimilated into the landscape.

- The proposal should be well designed and respect the existing scale, pattern and character of the surrounding area.

(ii) Impact of the quarry proposals

57. SE Plan policy M3 states that Oxfordshire should aim to deliver 1.0 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of crushed rock.
58. Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) policy SD3 states that very small quarries that supply traditional building stone to the immediate area may be permitted. Policy SD4 states that planning permission for additional ironstone extraction will only be granted in exchange for an agreed revocation of an existing planning permission containing workable reserves.
59. MWLP policy PB1 requires that processing plants, other necessary buildings and industries associated with a mineral working to be sited, designed, landscaped and maintained so as to minimise environmental disturbance. Any permission will be limited to the life of the mineral working.
60. MWLP policy PE13 states that mineral workings should be restored within a reasonable timescale to an after-use appropriate to the location and surroundings. Planning permission will not be granted for mineral working unless satisfactory proposals have been made for the restoration and after-use, and means of securing them in the long term.

(iii) Ecology

61. Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9) paragraph 14 states that development proposals provide many opportunities for building-in beneficial biodiversity or geological features as part of good design. When considering proposals, local planning authorities should maximise such opportunities in and around developments, using planning obligations where appropriate.
62. SE Plan policy NRM5 states that proposals shall avoid damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest and seek to ensure that damage to county wildlife sites and locally important wildlife and geological sites is avoided.
63. Policy NE6 of the WOLP requires that planning permission is not granted where the proposal would result in the loss of trees, woodlands or hedgerows which are important for their visual, historic, or biodiversity value. Removal will only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development would enhance the landscape quality and nature conservation value of the area.
64. WOLP policy NE15 requires that proposals do not have an adverse effect on a site supporting a specially protected species unless the damage to the ecological interest can be prevented through compliance with conditions or planning obligations.

65. MWLP policy PE14 prevents damage to sites of nature conservation importance. Proposals which would affect nature conservation interest will be assessed by taking into account the importance of the affected interest; the degree and permanence of the projected damage; and the extent to which replacement habitat can be expected to preserve the interest in the long term.

(iv) Impact on Local Amenity

66. WOLP policy BE19 states that planning permission will not be granted for development including the use of land, if because of the noise it will create, the occupants of housing and other noise sensitive development would be exposed to significant noise disturbance, unless there is an overriding need for the proposal which cannot be met elsewhere.

67. MWLP policy PE18 states that in determining applications covered by this plan the County Council will have regard to the appropriate provision of the Code of Practice which is part of this Plan. The Code of Practice states that suitable measures must be taken to suppress dust.

Comments of the Head of Sustainable Development

68. The key planning issues are i) visual impact of the proposed agricultural buildings on the surrounding landscape ii) whether the quarry proposals are acceptable iii) ecological considerations and iv) impact on local amenity.

(i) Impact of the proposed agricultural buildings

69. The main issue with the proposed new agricultural buildings is the massing and visibility of structures, and whether or not their impact on the landscape is greater than the contribution the development would make to the landscape and whether the proposed agricultural development of the area is in line with WOLP policy NE1.

70. Under planning permission 08/1590/CM the applicant is required to undertake extensive woodland planting on the northern screening bund in keeping with the surrounding landscape to reduce the visual intrusion of the farm buildings. Whilst the north-western screening bund is to be removed under that consent, the proposal that is subject to this report would re-instate the screening bund and plant woodland to match the existing landscaping strategy although there would be a short period when the woodland is not sufficiently developed to fully screen the buildings.

71. Furthermore, the development platform would be lower than that upon which the existing farm buildings sit because of the extraction of the mineral. This would increase the impact of screening that can be afforded to the proposed buildings. West Oxfordshire District Council has raised no objections to the proposal subject to a condition that requires the external appearance of the buildings to match the other buildings.

72. The agricultural buildings have been designed in line with guidance in the farm feasibility study submitted with the application regarding form and colour. The impact of the proposal should be significantly minimised by planting.
73. Provided the proposed woodland planting is carried out in accordance with the scheme submitted, it is my view that along with the reduction in level of the platform on which the buildings will sit and the existing screening bunds, the potential impact on the surrounding landscape should not be significant. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with WOLP policies NE1 and BE2 and SE Plan policy CC6.
74. An objection has been raised on the grounds that the proposal conflicts with WOLP policy NE3. In my view, the measures proposed to mitigate the impact of the massing of the structures are appropriate and would ensure that the buildings would not cause undue harm to the landscape. Furthermore, there is a substantial benefit to co-locating the remaining farm operations at this site and they would provide a significant contribution to the agricultural economy of the area under the ELS/HLS schemes (see paragraph 16). The District Council has raised no objections and I consider that the proposal is in line with WOLP policy NE3.

(ii) Quarry Proposals

75. The proposal involves the extension of Phase 4 within the centre of the site. The proposal would consolidate previous planning permissions, which include a planning permission for the production of 8,000 tonnes per annum of aggregate for use on the Estate roads. There is no overall proposed increase in rate of mineral extraction above the level already permitted.
76. The quarry would continue to be quite small and would continue to supply local stone for the maintenance and repair of historic buildings and buildings within conservation areas where it is necessary to have matching stone. Permitted reserves would be exhausted by 2015 should permission be granted. There is an objection to the proposal on the grounds that it may be irresponsible to exploit the mineral in the proposed quantity, and rather it should be used only for purposes for which it would be absolutely necessary in order to conserve it for future generations.
77. In response, the applicant states that there is not a significant quantity of workable mineral remaining. Much of the material within Phase 4 extension is not economic and will be used in quarry restoration. The workable reserves will continue to be used to supply local markets and benefit new uses. In my view the proposal is consistent with SE Plan policy M3 and MWLP policies SD3.
78. The proposal does not include the revocation of permitted ironstone reserves elsewhere in the County as sought by MWLP policy SD4. However, the quantity of material in the Phase 4 extension is quite small, a significant proportion would be used in quarry restoration and on the Estate farm roads

and no additional land is required for mineral working as a result. In my view, therefore, the relevance of this policy in this particular case is not great.

Restoration

79. Quarry restoration would be in keeping with previous planning permissions and subject to the imposition of conditions recommended by the County Ecologist. The proposal is in accordance with MWLP PE13.
80. The stone saw shed is covered by the restoration drawings submitted with the planning application. MWLP policy PB1 requires removal of all buildings associated with mineral extraction once extraction has been completed. A condition can be attached to any consent to require the removal of the stone saw shed once extraction ceases to ensure that the proposal is in line with MWLP policy PB1.

(iii) Ecology

81. The County Ecologist was initially concerned that the Protected Species Survey undertaken in 2008 would now be out of date. The applicant has provided an updated Wildlife Survey dated December 2009. The survey identified that a number of trees intended to be removed have a medium to high risk in terms of impact upon bats and recommends therefore that trees should be soft-felled. Soft-felling of trees involves the cutting down in careful stages. This can be required by a condition if planning permission is granted. The development would therefore be in line with WOLP policy NE6.
82. There has been no evidence of Badger Setts found in or within 30m of the application site. The survey recommends that badger surveys are undertaken annually. This can be required by a condition if planning permission is granted. The proposal therefore satisfies MWLP policy PE14.
83. The recommendations within the survey are welcomed by the County Ecologist who raises no objections to the proposal subject to conditions proposed by the survey. It has been demonstrated that this proposal would cause no adverse impact upon protected species, subject to regular surveys being undertaken. The proposal is therefore in accordance with SE Plan policy NRM5 and WOLP policy NE15.
84. The site benefits from a Long Term Management Plan to ensure the nature conservation interests of the site for 20 years above and beyond the 5 year aftercare period. The Management Plan also requires public access to the geological feature which is shown on the restoration plans. The provisions within the Long Term Management Plan would be carried forward if planning permission is given for the site in accordance with PPS9.

(iv) Impact on Local Amenity

Noise

85. The Environmental Protection Officer was initially concerned about the potential noise impact of activity in the stone saw shed. The applicant has provided further noise reports and the Environmental Protection Officer is now satisfied that the stone saw shed would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity. Appropriate conditions can be attached to any planning permission given that reflects the mitigation measures described in the noise reports. The proposal is therefore compliant with WOLP policy BE19 and MWLP policy PE18.

Dust

86. The application is not accompanied by a dust remediation strategy for the stone saw shed. Due its potentially adverse impact I suggest that a condition be imposed to require the submission of an appropriate dust scheme before any use of the stone saw shed. The proposal meets other environmental criteria and in my view, subject to a requirement for submission of a dust scheme, the proposal meets the requirements of MWLP policy PE18.

Other issues

87. The applicant has agreed to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that previous planning permissions that relate to quarry operations are no longer implemented. Conditions that are attached to those permissions would be brought forward into a new consent if planning permission is granted for this proposal.
88. The Environment Agency has recommended that a condition requiring that a surface water management scheme for the agricultural operations be submitted prior to commencement of development. In my view this information is not required for the commencement of mineral extraction but that it would be reasonable to allow mineral extraction to commence before this information is provided to create the development platform for the agricultural buildings in a timely manner. The Environment Agency has agreed to a condition modified in this way.
89. A respondent has raised the issue that significant carbon emissions may be produced due to substantial mineral extraction at the site and that these sorts of projects should be delayed until energy-efficient extraction methods are developed. It would be unreasonable to prevent an established development from continuing for this reason. The quarrying operation is low intensity and there are few vehicles on-site working the mineral. The agglomeration of agricultural activities would produce an overall net-reduction in the number of vehicles movements related to these activities and could in effect reduce potential emissions. The Environmental Health officer has not opposed the scheme on such grounds. In my view this issue is not significant and does not need to be considered against climate change policies.

Conclusion

90. There is a need for the applicant to make provisions for livestock farming during peak seasons and for expansion of the farm. This provision is not satisfactorily met in the current farming building arrangements and the farm considers there is a need to develop larger and more versatile units.
91. The proposed buildings are smaller than the current agricultural units at the quarry site but there is nevertheless concern over their impact on the landscape. I do not consider that these concerns are justified given that the development platform is to be lowered and additional screening in the form of bunding and woodland planting is to be provided. The buildings would be designed so as to be in keeping with those already present on the site in accordance with WOLP policy NE2.
92. It is my view that the scheme is, therefore, in line with WOLP policies NE1 and NE3 as the proposal, with full landscaping, would not adversely affect the local landscape, and in time the remaining visible structures would be more in keeping with other agricultural developments in the District.
93. The quarry proposals are relatively minor, do not increase landtake or increase production capacity. The proposal does not meet the requirements of MWLP policy SD4 but satisfies SE Plan policy M3 and MWLP policy SD3 in that the proposal would continue to supply minerals to local markets and to meet increasing demand.
94. The stone saw shed has the potential to cause an impact on local amenity. These can be overcome by the use of appropriate conditions limiting noise production and requiring a scheme for the management of dust to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development. The stone saw shed would also be removed once quarry operations cease. The proposal is therefore compliant with MWLP policy PE18 and WOLP policy BE19.
95. The development overall is consistent with development plan policies on mineral extraction development in countryside, biodiversity, amenity and traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

96. **It is RECOMMENDED that:**
 - (a) **subject to a legal agreement requiring:**
 - (i) **public access to the geological feature,**
 - (ii) **a management plan including a programme of monitoring to operate for 20 years over and above the 5 year after care period;**

- (iii) funding for the implementation of the management plan;**
- (iv) the applicant not to further implement any quarry operations approved under previous planning permissions;**

that planning permission be granted for the development proposed in Application 09/1328/P/CM subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Sustainable Development but to cover matters included in Annex 1 to this report;

- (b) if the legal agreement referred to in (a) above is not completed within 10 weeks of the date of this meeting the Head of Sustainable Development be authorised to refuse the application on the grounds that it would not comply with South East Plan policy NRM5 in that there would be no satisfactory provision for the long term management of the restored site.**

CHRIS COUSINS
Head of Sustainable Development

Background Papers: File Reference: MW.0202/09
 File Reference: 8.5/3929/1

January 2010

Heads of Conditions

1. Complete compliance
2. Development to commence within three years of permission.
3. Standard working hours.
4. Life of the quarry limited to December 2015, restoration to 31 December 2016.
5. Retention and protection of trees and existing bunding
6. Highway to be kept free of mud and dust
7. No more than 24,500 tonnes per year shall be extracted.
8. No material other than brown ironstone shall be extracted in block form.
9. Crushing only to take place 8 weeks of the year to export a maximum of 8,000 tonnes per year of aggregate.
10. No development until details of the location of crushing is submitted.
11. All soils to be kept on site
12. Dust control measures to be agreed.
13. Noise levels not to exceed recommended levels at nearest receptors.
14. No reversing beepers.
15. No hydraulic rock splitting.
16. No blasting.
17. Hydrological monitoring.
18. Construction of the agricultural buildings shall not take place until surface water management scheme approved.
19. No pumping of water.
20. Erection of boxes to monitor breeding birds.
21. Erection of boxes to monitor bats.
22. Annual badger sett surveys.
23. Trees should be soft-felled during September – October or March – April to avoid breeding birds.
24. Retention of old and decaying trees.
25. Cessation of work if protected species are found.
26. No removal of vegetation during bird breeding season.
27. Submission of a revised restoration scheme showing removal of saw shed.
28. Submission of a detailed landscaping scheme.
29. Agricultural buildings to be built in accordance with the submitted plans.
30. Agricultural buildings shall be constructed of materials to match the existing barns.
31. Removal of existing Court Farm buildings.
32. Restoration materials shall be wholly inert.
33. Five year aftercare period.
34. Woodland planting in accordance with approved scheme.
35. No other buildings than those shown on approved plans.
36. No floodlighting.

Relevant Development Plan policies

Government Policy

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Regional Policy

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England

C4, CC6, M3, NRM5

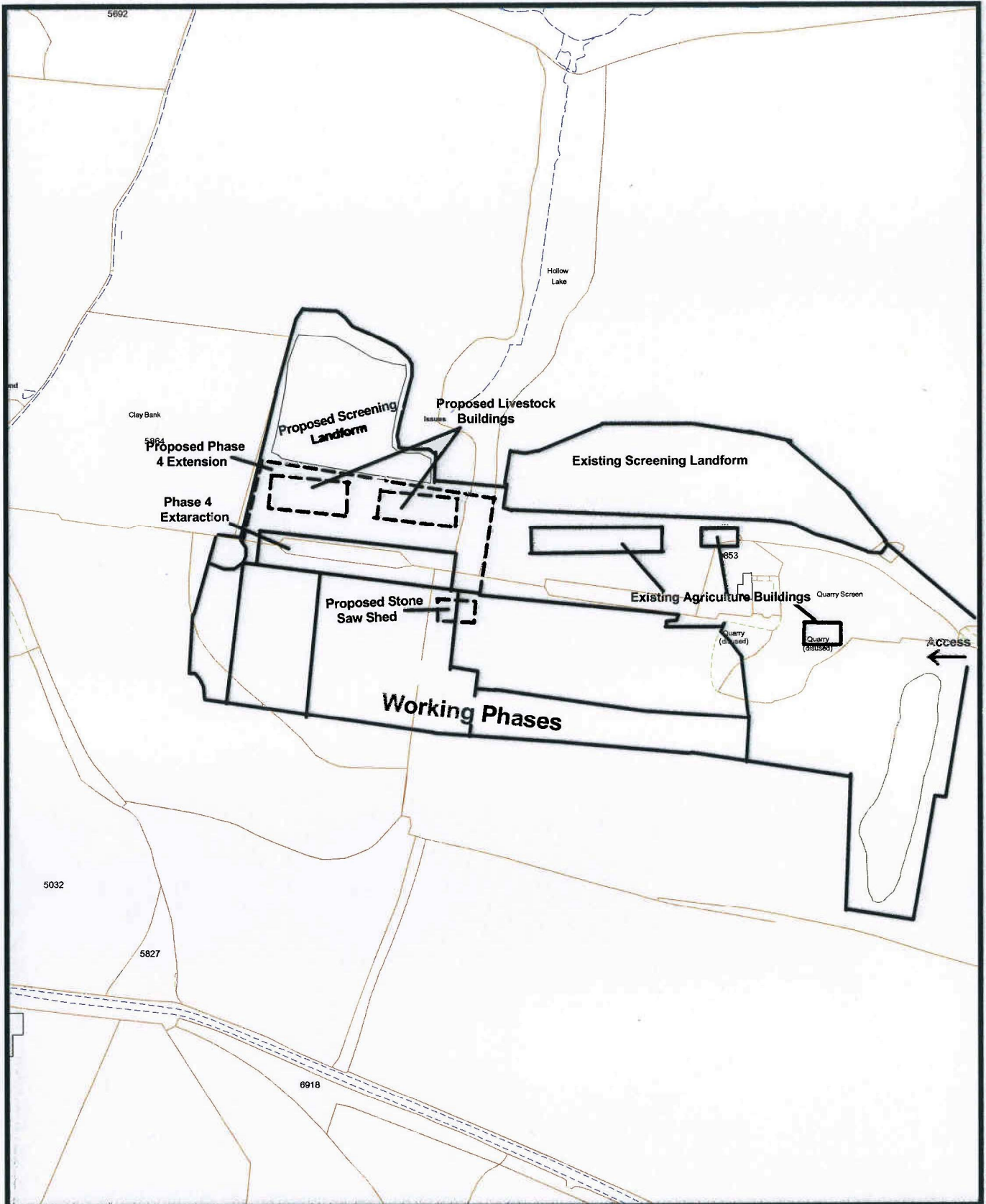
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1996

SD3, SD4, PB1, PE13, PE14, PE18

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

NE1, NE3, NE6, NE15, BE2, BE19

Plan 2



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Scale: 1:3500
Plot Date: 27/1/2010
By: T.Philp
Dept: