

SCREENING OPINION

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2011

- Screening Opinion reference:** SF/17a
- Applicant:** I O Warren Farming Partnership.
- Date Received:** 24th March 2017
- Site:** Land at Theale Farm, Slinfold, West Sussex, RH12 3PJ
- Proposal:** Extraction of Horsham Stone with restoration to agricultural use and temporary storage of extracted stone pending sale.

The proposed development is for the extraction of Horsham Stone from land adjacent to a historic quarry which has been in operation for over 20 years. The proposed development would constitute a new, larger, area of stone quarrying extending to the east of the existing site across the full area of a contained field. It is proposed that extraction would amount to approximately 15,000 tonnes of mineral and take place over a period of approximately 15 years.

The main area of the proposed site (the quarry area) comprises a large agricultural field to the east of Slinfold and northwest of Theale Farm. The field comprises an area of approximately 6 hectares and is largely surrounded by mature trees. To the south and east, the site is bordered by Ancient Woodland and to the north/west the site is bordered by Tributaries of the River Arun. Areas to the west of the site have historically been worked, however, the planning permission for extraction of this area recently expired and is required to be fully restored in 2017.

The proposed development would also require the use of a 1.6 km haul route across open countryside/agricultural land utilising a mixture of farm tracks and includes sections of public Bridleway/Footpath. This haul road leads to/from Lower Broadbridge Farm where materials would be stored prior to use by Horsham Historic Stone. This would be the same haul route that has served previous quarrying operations since 1995.

It is understood that the proposed quarrying operation would continue to be a low intensity operation consistent with previous quarrying operations at the site. This would mean that low volumes of material would be extracted each year (approximately 1000 tonnes), limited plant/vehicular movements required (one excavator on site required), and extraction taking place over a period of approximately 40 days each year (campaign extraction). It is also understood that extraction would take place at a limited depth (5m maximum) with overburden and soils being replaced shortly after extraction to allow for agricultural use.

The following Screening Opinion is based on the development proposed being in general accordance with that set out above.

Classification of the Proposed Development

The proposal does not comprise Schedule 1 development, as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 ('the EIA Regulations').

The proposed development would fall within Part 2(a) of Schedule 2 to the EIA Regulations relating to the Extractive Industry, specifically '*Quarries, open cast mining and peat extraction*'. The proposed development would meet the threshold criteria ('*All development except construction of buildings or other ancillary structures where the new floorspace does not exceed 1000 m²*' as set out in Column 2 of Schedule 2) and thus consideration needs to be given as to whether the development has the potential to result in 'significant environmental effects' which require an EIA'. The following therefore considers whether the proposed development would result in significant effects on the environment such as to require EIA.

Characteristics of Development	
Development Area	Approximately 6-7 Hectares including 1.6km Haul route.
Development Nature / Scale	The proposed development is for the extraction of approximately 15,000 tonnes of Horsham Stone on a low volume 'campaign' basis. The main impacts of the development are likely to be localised, however, this would also include the haul route and storage area for extracted material.

	Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?
1. Will the development involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies etc.)?	Likely. The development includes extraction of stone at a depth of up to 5m, which will result in a permanent change in local topography. However, it is understood that following replacement of overburden/soils, levels would be restored near to original levels.	No significant effect anticipated. Although some permanent changes to local topography, changes in levels unlikely to be significant and land would be restored to agriculture.
2. Will the development use natural resources such as land, water, materials, or energy, especially resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Likely. The proposed development would result in the extraction of approximately 15,000 tonnes of Horsham Stone, a finite mineral. Some use of fossil fuels during excavation and transit of materials but not expected to be extraordinary.	Typical of a minerals operation which seeks to provide building stone to meet identified needs. No significant adverse effect anticipated.
3. Will the development involve the use, storage, production of substances or materials which could be harmful to people or the environment?	No.	Not anticipated. Use of plant limited.

	Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?
4. Will the development produce significant volumes of wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning?	No. Excavated stone will be used as building material by an adjoining masonry site and overburden/soils used in restoration.	None anticipated. No greater than during historic extraction operations.
5. Will the development give rise to significant noise, vibration, light, dust, odours? - during construction - during operation	Likely. There is potential for noise and dust to be created during periods of extraction/restoration and movement of materials to the storage area. No artificial lighting proposed. Limited use of plant proposed for limited periods in the year.	No significant effects anticipated due to low level of extraction campaigns.
6. Does the proposal have the potential to release pollutants to air, land, or water?	Limited likelihood associated with fuels used for operation of plant.	No significant effects anticipated.
7. Are there areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage – e.g. where existing environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely. The proposed development would fall adjacent to previously restored area of extraction, and use established haul routes storage areas. No known environmental damage arising from previous activities.	Unlikely. No significant effects anticipated as a result of this proposal.
8. Is there a high risk of accidents during construction or operation of the development which could have effects on people or the environment?	Limited likelihood associated with use of plant and machinery. Plant typical of excavation activities and associated transport.	No significant effects anticipated. Vehicular crossings of PROWs required however no recorded issues in past 20 years for similar operations.
9. Will the project result in social changes e.g. demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Unlikely. The proposed development would support an established stone business.	No significant effects anticipated.
10. Are there areas on or around the location which are protected under international, national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value which could be affected by the project?	Likely. To the south and south west of the extraction site is Slinfold Stream and Quarry which are designated as a SSSI and RIGS. Both designations relate to geological matters providing access to exposures of Horsham Stone. No other designated areas in the immediate vicinity.	No significant effects anticipated. The proposed development is unlikely to have any impact upon SSSI/RIGS destinations.
11. Are there any other areas around the location which are important for their ecology e.g. wetlands, forests, coastal zone which could be affected by the project?	Likely. The main area of the site (extraction area) is bordered to the south by Ancient Woodland. The haul road would pass through this woodland albeit on an	No significant effects anticipated. Although the proposed extraction site would fall in close proximity to Ancient Woodlands, standoff off could be easily achieved.

	Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?
	established farm track.	The haul route would pass through Ancient Woodland, however, this would be via an established track historically used for transit of minerals and agriculture.
12. Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected or sensitive species of fauna or flora which could be affected by the project?	<p>Likely.</p> <p>The extraction area is surrounded by hedgerows, mature trees, streams, and Ancient Woodland with ponds.</p> <p>The proposed haul road covers a significant distance across agricultural land and adjacent to mature hedgerows. However, this utilises existing tracks which have historically been used for such purposes without any known significant impacts.</p> <p>To the north of the proposed storage area (within the Broadbridge Farm main yard area) there are a number of large mature trees.</p>	Subject to suitable standoff from sensitive features, typical of quarrying activities, no significant effects anticipated.
13. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>Likely.</p> <p>The extraction site is bordered to the north by the River Arun and to the west by Slinfold Stream. The proposed development would lower ground levels and thus could have the potential to impact upon the hydrology of adjacent watercourses through an altered drainage regime in the locality.</p> <p>The proposed haul road would also cross a number of streams/ditches and the River Arun. However, these are established farm tracks.</p>	<p>No significant effects anticipated.</p> <p>Although there is potential for impacts, depths of working and likely restoration levels are not likely to result in significant changes to local topography and/or hydrology. Historic quarrying activities are not known to have resulted in any such impacts.</p>
14. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>Unlikely.</p> <p>The proposed development does not fall within a designated landscape area, however does fall in a rural countryside location.</p> <p>Storage of materials would fall within an established yard area.</p>	Potential for some visual impact within the immediate landscape. However, such impacts are not considered significant within the meaning of the regulations.
15. Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	<p>Unlikely.</p> <p>The main area of the site falls in a rural location and would only be</p>	No significant adverse effect anticipated.

	Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?
	visible form a limited number of residential dwellings in the immediate vicinity.	
16. Are there routes on/around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities which could be affected by the project?	<p>Likely.</p> <p>The main extraction site falls in relatively close proximity to a number of PROW to the north and west. This includes both bridleways and footpaths which form part of the West Sussex Literary Trail. However, any impacts would likely be transient and for limited periods of the year.</p> <p>The applicant envisages an average of 10 vehicular movements a day (each way) for a maximum period of approximately 40 days per annum.</p> <p>The proposed haul route includes sections of both public bridleway and public footpaths.</p>	<p>The low volume campaign nature of the proposal is such that any impacts are unlikely to be significant within the meaning of the regulations.</p> <p>No significant adverse effects anticipated.</p>
17. Are there any routes on or around location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	<p>Unlikely.</p> <p>Vehicle movements associated with the development would principally be from the extraction area to the storage yard via farm tracks. Any movements to/from the public highway would be limited in number and directly from Broadbridge Farm onto the A281.</p>	No significant effects anticipated.
18. Are there any features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>Likely.</p> <p>A number of Listed Buildings/structures are located in close proximity to the proposed haul route (including Theale Farmhouse). Further, the storage area within Broadbridge Farm includes a listed Farmhouse.</p> <p>Potential for temporary impact associated with movement of materials between extraction area and storage area. See also Q10 above re geological SSSI/RIGS sites.</p>	<p>The low volume of extraction over a limited campaign period is such that any impacts are unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>No significant effects anticipated on historic or cultural features.</p>
19. Will there be any loss of Greenfield land?	<p>Likely.</p> <p>Development would result in quarrying activities on greenfield land, potentially over a lengthy period.</p>	<p>Although there would be an impact on greenfield land, the development would be phased to minimise the extent of impact at any one time, and upon completion the land would be reinstated to its original use for agriculture.</p> <p>No significant effects</p>

	Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?
		anticipated.
20. Are there existing land uses around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>Unlikely.</p> <p>The proposed extraction area would temporarily affect agricultural land, however, this would be limited to short 'campaign' periods and land restored to agricultural use on a rolling basis.</p> <p>Limited number of residential/agricultural properties in the locality, primarily in proximity to the haul route which would be used for limited periods and a low volume of vehicular movements.</p> <p>Proposed storage areas within Broadbridge Farm would be located adjacent to a farm house and a food manufacturing/distribution operation. However proposed activities would be consistent with historic uses and facilitate an established stone business within the yard.</p>	No significant effects anticipated.
21. Are there areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	<p>Unlikely. The application site is primarily within a rural location.</p> <p>Limited number of residential/agricultural properties in the locality.</p>	No significant effects on densely populated or built-up areas anticipated.
22. Are there areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, community facilities which could be affected by the project?	<p>Unlikely.</p> <p>With the exception of a limited number of sensitive residential receptors the proposed development falls within rural agricultural land.</p> <p>Food manufacturing/distribution operation adjacent to storage area within Broadbridge may be sensitive to environmental conditions. However proposed activities would be consistent with historic uses and facilitate an established stone business within the yard.</p>	No significant effects anticipated.
23. Are there any areas in or near the application site which contain high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the development, e.g. groundwater resources, forestry, agriculture, tourism, minerals?	<p>Unlikely.</p> <p>No such resources are or likely to be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>See also Q13 above re nearby streams.</p>	No significant effects on such resources anticipated.
24. Is the location	Likely.	Subject to appropriate

	Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?
susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding, or adverse climatic conditions which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	<p>The extraction area falls in close proximity to the River Arun and Slinfold Stream, the land immediately adjacent to which is at a high risk of flooding. However, it is likely that the extraction area would remain outside of any area highlighted to be at potential risk of flooding.</p> <p>The applicant proposes a stand-off from field edges and notable features off approximately 10-15m.</p> <p>The proposed haul route would cross the river Arun, however, extraction campaigns and associated vehicular movements are unlikely to be undertaken during periods of wet weather or times of potential flood events.</p>	standoff from adjacent rivers, no significant effects on such resources anticipated.
25. Are there plans for future land uses on or around the site which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely. No such land uses identified.	No significant effects identified.
26. Is there a potential for transboundary impacts?	Unlikely. No boundaries within or near site. Impacts likely to be localised.	No significant impacts anticipated.
27. Will any effects be unusual in the area or particularly complex?	Unlikely. The proposed development is consistent with historic land uses and neither the works proposed or the location of the site are particularly complex.	No significant effects anticipated within the meaning of the Regulations.

Conclusion

This screening opinion relates to a proposed development for the extraction of Horsham Stone on land immediately adjacent to a recently expired extraction site. The proposed operation would extend in a new larger area of land, but remain largely consistent with previous low volume quarrying operations undertaken at the site since 1995.

Guidance is provided in National Planning Practice Guidance: Environmental Impact Assessment to aid local planning authorities to determine whether a project is likely to have significant environmental effects. This includes a set of indicative thresholds and criteria. For Part 2(a) the indicative criteria and threshold is *“All new open cast mines and underground mines. Clay, sand and gravel workings, quarries covering more than 15 hectares or involve the extraction of more than 30,000 tonnes of mineral per year”*.

Further, guidance suggests the key issues to be considered are: *“The likelihood of significant effects will tend to depend on the scale and duration of the works, and the likely consequent impact of noise, dust, discharges to water and visual intrusion.”*

In this case, the site area is approximately 6-7ha and extraction is unlikely to exceed 1000 tonnes per annum. In both cases this is significantly lower than indicative thresholds. The operations would occupy a new and larger area, however, they would fall immediately adjacent to a historically quarried area, utilise the same established infrastructure (haul roads/storage areas), and continue to be a low volume/intensity operation consistent with quarrying activities carried out since 1995.

The proposed development would fall in close proximity to a number of potentially sensitive features as considered above, however, quarrying operations are historic to the area and have similar activities have been established in the immediate area for a period of over 20 years without any known significant effects, it is not considered that the potential for significant environmental impacts is likely.

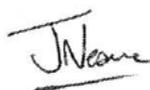
Taking into account selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA regulations and National Planning Policy Framework - Planning Practice Guidance as set out above, it is considered that the proposed development is not likely to give rise to environmental impacts of a scale sufficient to require an EIA. Accordingly, the County Planning Authority considers that the development **does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment.**

Screening Opinion.

In the opinion of the County Planning Authority the development **would not require an Environmental Impact Assessment.**

Signed:

Reviewer



James Neave
Principal Planner
Date: 18th April 2017

Sam Dumbrell
Senior Planner
Date: 18th April 2017

on behalf of the Strategic Planning Manager