

**WOOTTON BASSETT: PROPOSED CONCRETE BATCHING PLANT AND
ASSOCIATED STORAGE AT WOOTTON BASSETT AGGREGATE DEPOT,
MARLBOROUGH ROAD, WOOTTON BASSETT, FOR FOSTER YEOMAN LTD.
(Application No. N.06.07007)**

Purpose of Report

1. To comment on the application and recommend that permission for the proposed concrete batching plant at Wootton Bassett be granted subject to conditions.

The Site

2. The aggregate depot is located on the south side of Wootton Bassett. It is south of the main Bath-Paddington railway line and west of Marlborough Road. The nearest residential properties are approximately 60 metres north of the application site and north of the railway line. In addition there are residential properties around the entrance of the site on Marlborough Road.
3. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.

Planning History

4. No previous planning applications have been made on the application site.

The Application

5. The applicant, Foster Yeoman Ltd., has been importing aggregates by rail from its quarry in Somerset to the depot in Wootton Bassett for a number of years. Permission is now sought to install a low level concrete batching plant at the site.
6. Historically the site has operated at a throughput of up to 600,000 tonnes per annum. In 2004 only 250,000 tonnes were delivered from the site. It is anticipated that this proposal would see an additional throughput of up to 100,000 tonnes per annum, ie 100,000 tonnes of concrete leaving the site.
7. Cement and sand would be imported by road and combined with the aggregate imported by rail to make the concrete. Using a loading shovel aggregate and sand would be placed into a hopper which would discharge on to a conveyor belt. At the top of the conveyor the aggregate, sand, cement and water would be mixed in an enclosed mill to produce the concrete. Surface water from the plant would be directed to a pit and reused in the concrete manufacture. The applicant states that the concrete plant would be fully enclosed and all mixing of the constituent materials would take place within the plant. Concrete would be dispatched to sealed lorries via a fully enclosed pipe to prevent dust particles escaping.

8. The concrete batching plant would be positioned on hardstanding to reduce the creation of mud. Due to the length of the haul road from the batching plant to the access on Marlborough Road (over 400 metres), it is unlikely that mud would be tracked on to the highway. However, the haul road and part of Marlborough Road are swept twice a week by external road sweeper and the internal haul roads are dampened by a water bowser. In addition, the applicant has proposed new tree planting and an acoustic fence to mitigate the visual impact of the plant and also the potential impacts of noise and dust.
9. A traffic assessment concluded that the proposed plant would generate heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements equivalent to a 2 per cent increase in traffic flows on the adjacent road network during the morning peak hour (08.00-09.00) and zero impact during the afternoon peak hour. This 2 per cent equates to 18 HGV movements i.e. nine in and nine out of the site. In total, 70 HGV movements per day are anticipated to be generated by the concrete batching plant. This includes lorries importing sand and cement for the concrete production.
10. Proposed operating hours are 07.00-17.30 Monday to Friday and 07.00-13.00 Saturday. The traffic assessment found that the majority of traffic movements to and from the site are made via the north to link with the A3102 and M4, avoiding the town centre.
11. A protected species survey found slow worms and a grass snake around the entrance to the site, although no protected species were found in the area which would be immediately affected by the concrete batching plant. A badger survey was also undertaken but found no active badger setts or any signs of permanent occupation by badgers.
12. In recognition of the concerns of local residents regarding the plant, the applicant has stated that a Liaison Group would be set up where issues relating to the aggregates depot could be openly discussed. This Group would meet on a regular basis and include, amongst others, local members, planning officers, environmental health officers, site employees and local residents.

Consultation

13. **North Wiltshire District Council Planning** - has concerns over the proximity of the proposed plant to the nearby residential units, the occupiers of which may suffer from noise, dust, fumes and traffic disturbance. An acoustic fence appears inadequate for this site but the Environmental Health Officer would need to comment on this.
14. **North Wiltshire District Council Environmental Health Officer** - is satisfied with the details provided regarding dust and noise.
15. **Wootton Bassett Town Council** - objects to the application expressing concerns regarding noise, dust, traffic and odour given the proximity to residential properties. Also has concerns regarding access arrangements over the railway bridge.
16. **Natural England** - no objection in respect of legally protected species as not aware that they are likely to be adversely affected by the proposals.
17. **Environment Agency** - no objection subject to a number of conditions relating to flooding and flood defences.

18. **Countryside Section** - satisfied that no mitigation or planning conditions are required for badgers. Finer details of landscape proposals should be submitted prior to the commencement of works on site.
19. **Highways Development Control** - transport assessment demonstrates that the proposal will not have a significant impact on the highway network. Therefore no highway objection raised.
20. **Rights of Way** - a 50 metre length of Footpath 1 is coincident with the access road. An increase in traffic generation of 2 per cent is anticipated and as the plant will not operate on Sunday the proposal is unlikely to be a deterrent to the use of this footpath.

Publicity

21. The application was advertised in the local press, by site notices and neighbour notification. Eleven representations have been received including one from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). Copies of the consultation replies and representations referred to above are available for inspection in the **Members' Room**.

Planning Policy

22. The following planning policies are considered relevant to this application:
 - Policies 9, 11 and 12 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Local Plan 2001
23. The policies are set out in full in **Appendix 3**.

Planning Considerations

24. The application must be considered in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The main issues are the suitability of the site for the operations proposed and the potential for noise, dust and visual impacts.

Suitability of the site

25. Policy 9 of the Adopted Minerals Local Plan provides for the safeguarding of the Wootton Bassett rail aggregates depot from development that may adversely affect its viability either directly or indirectly. It is also intended that the final version of the Minerals Core Strategy will provide a definitive policy to maintain an approach to safeguarding the existing depot at Wootton Bassett. The location of a concrete batching plant at Wootton Bassett aggregate depot is likely to have a positive effect on the viability of the depot as productivity would increase. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 9.
26. Policy 11 of the Minerals Local Plan deals with the erection of mineral manufacturing plant ancillary to rail aggregate depots and states that permission will only be granted where the development will not generate significant adverse environmental impacts. In addition, the policy states that the greater part of the minerals used in the manufacture should be brought into the depot by rail. Concrete batching plants similar to the one proposed at Wootton Bassett typically use 60 per cent aggregate, 30 per cent sand and 10 per cent cement in the making of concrete. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 11 as the majority of the material (the aggregate) would be brought in by rail.

27. The District Council Environmental Health Officer is satisfied with the proposals for controlling dust and noise and in the event of permission being granted conditions would be imposed to control dust and noise. These conditions would include a noise level limit for operation of the plant, the submission of a dust suppression scheme and details of the acoustic fence and landscaping.
28. As not all the constituents of concrete can be imported by rail, some material would need to be imported by road. Policy 12 of the Minerals Local Plan states that the importation of minerals to existing manufacturing plant will only be permitted when such importation will not give rise to unacceptable environmental impacts. Potential impacts are considered below.

Noise, dust and visual impacts

29. The majority of those who made representations raised the issue of dust arising from the existing operations. The concern was that if more material was being imported for concrete production, the incidence of dust arising from the off-loading and handling of material would increase.
30. Whilst the creation of small amounts of dust cannot be completely ruled out, modern plant such as that proposed at Wootton Bassett is designed so as to prevent dust escaping during delivery of materials and production. The plant would be a wet mix concrete plant which means that the concrete would leave the plant in a slurried form rather than as a dry mix. This would further reduce the potential for dust. The District Council Environmental Health Officer is satisfied with the recommendations made in the Dust Survey and dust control measures suggested by the Survey can be imposed by condition. The measures include storing material in specially designed bays and using the water bowser on haul roads.
31. Noise of traffic entering and leaving the site was also raised as an issue which could worsen if more HGVs were servicing the concrete batching plant. However, the proposed operating hours are as existing for the rest of the site, i.e. 07.00-17.30 Monday to Friday and 07.00-13.00 Saturday, and the number of lorries generated by the proposal would be low. Local residents have also highlighted backlogs of traffic on the railway bridge as lorries turning into the site are delayed by lorries leaving. Although the site access is narrow, the Highway Authority has raised no objection as the Transport Assessment demonstrates no significant impact on the highway network. The current access has a good safety record.
32. The CPRE and a local resident have stated that as the concrete would largely be used in Swindon, an alternative site should be found in Swindon. Whilst it is preferable to locate plant as close as possible to the area it would serve, importing 60 per cent of the concrete 'ingredient', i.e. aggregate, by rail would ensure HGV numbers on local roads are kept significantly lower than if the aggregate were brought from Somerset to Swindon by road.

Conclusions

33. The application seeks permission for a concrete batching plant ancillary to a rail aggregate depot. Over half of the material used in the concrete batching process would be aggregate brought to the site by rail.

34. The level of additional traffic movements which would be generated by the proposal is low (approximately 70 movements per day) and no objections have been raised by the Highway Authority. Dust, noise and visual impact would be controlled by additional planting, acoustic fencing and the use of modern plant. Conditions to control dust and noise would be imposed on any permission.
35. The proposal is in accordance with Policies 9, 11 and 12 of the Adopted Minerals Local Plan and it is recommended that permission be granted subject to conditions.

Recommendation

36. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

Commencement

1. The development shall be carried out solely in accordance with the approved submitted details except as modified by these conditions.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with approved plans and details.

2. The development hereby granted shall commence within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

End date

3. In the event of the permanent cessation of rail imports of aggregate to the Wootton Bassett aggregate depot, all operations approved by this permission shall cease and all plant, buildings and hardstanding relating to this permission shall be removed within one year of the cessation of aggregate importation by rail. The site shall be restored in accordance with a scheme submitted to and agreed in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the prompt and effective restoration of the site.

Hours of Operation

4. Except in the case of emergency, no operations or activities authorised or required by this permission shall be carried out other than during the following hours:

07.00-17.30 Monday to Friday
07.00-13.00 Saturday

No such operations or activities shall take place on Sunday, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and for the avoidance of doubt.

Highway Safety

5. No commercial vehicle using the site shall enter the public highway unless its wheels and chassis have been cleaned to prevent material being deposited on the public highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to prevent mud, dust and debris being deposited on the highway.

Noise

6. During the permitted working hours the freefield equivalent continuous noise level attributable to the operation of the concrete batching plant shall not exceed 50 dB (LAeq) one hour freefield at the nearest inhabited residential property.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of local residents.

7. Prior to the commencement of development, details of the acoustic fence shown on Drawing No. WB/510A shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. Following approval of the details the fence shall be constructed in complete compliance with the approved details and maintained during the life of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of local residents.

Site and Plant Maintenance

8. All vehicles, plant and machinery associated with the development shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and shall be fitted with and use effective silencers. All reversing beepers shall be set at the lowest practical level and shall be white noise rather than pure tone.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of local residents.

Dust

9. Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme and programme of measures for the suppression of dust shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. The scheme shall include inter alia:

- (i) The suppression of dust caused by the moving, processing and storing of materials within the site.
- (ii) Dust suppression on haul roads.
- (iii) Provision for monitoring and review of the scheme.

Such scheme shall be implemented and complied with at all times.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the locality from the effects of any dust arising from the development.

Ecology

10. Should disturbance or destruction to any reptile habitat identified in the Protected Species Survey (October 2006) be anticipated, the Mineral Planning Authority shall be contacted prior to any works taking place. Natural England or some other suitably qualified person shall be consulted as to how best to proceed.

Reason: To prevent disturbance or destruction to reptile habitat.

11. The clearance of vegetation from the application site shall occur only between the end of August and the beginning of March, or following a search for active birds' nests within the site.

Reason: To avoid the nominal bird nesting season and in the interests of wildlife conservation.

12. Prior to the commencement of development on site, a scheme of landscaping shall be submitted to the Mineral Planning Authority for written approval. The landscaping scheme shall include details of the tree and shrub species shown on Drawing No. WB/508C and shall be implemented in the first planting season following the date of this permission. In the event of any trees or shrubs dying or becoming seriously damaged or diseased within five years of completion of development, these shall be replaced with plants of a similar size and species.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and wildlife conservation.

Pollution Prevention

13. There shall be no discharge of foul or contaminated drainage or trade effluent from the site into either the groundwater or any surface waters, whether direct or via soakaways.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

14. Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls, details of which shall be submitted to the Mineral Planning Authority for approval. The volume of the bunded compound shall be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10 per cent. If there is multiple tankage, the compound shall be at least equivalent to the capacity of the largest tank, or the combined capacity of interconnected tanks, plus 10 per cent or 25 per cent of the total volume that could be stored at any one time, whichever is the greater.

All filling points, vents, gauges and sight glasses shall be located within the bund. The drainage system of the bund shall be sealed with no discharge to any watercourse, land or underground strata. Associated pipework shall be located above ground, where possible, and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank overflow pipe outlets shall be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

Water Management

15. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for the provision of surface water drainage works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. The drainage works shall be completed in accordance with the details and timetable agreed and implemented for the life of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal.

16. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for maintaining the integrity of the existing culverted watercourse, both during construction of the proposal and afterwards, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details of the Land Drainage Consent application.

Reason: To maintain flood defences whilst works are carried out which may affect the permanent defences.

Floodlighting

17. No floodlighting shall be erected on the site until a scheme of floodlighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the height of the lighting posts, intensity of the lights (specified in lux levels), spread of light, including approximate light spillage to the rear of the lighting posts, any measures proposed to minimise the impact of the floodlighting or disturbance through glare and the times when such lights will be illuminated.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of local residents.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Consultation replies and correspondence