

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
9th JANUARY 2002

**TISBURY: PROPOSED ERECTION OF A
BUILDING TO HOUSE A STONE SAW AT
CHICKSGROVE QUARRY FOR MRS. S. COLLINS
(Application No. S.01.2062)**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the above application and to recommend permission be granted subject to conditions.

Background

2. Chicksgrove Quarry operates under planning permission S.97.0332. The quarry currently provides a natural stone used locally. In the past one of the main uses for the stone was the ongoing programme of restoration at Salisbury Cathedral. The quarry now serves the local market for the construction and refurbishment of buildings in the area.

The Site

3. The site lies to the south of the C24 at Upper Chicksgrove, adjacent to the Salisbury-Exeter railway line. The quarry is accessed off Quarry Lane, an unclassified road, from the C24 which passes through the settlement of Upper Chicksgrove and across a level crossing. The application site is approximately 62.05 square metres and lies immediately adjacent to the main permitted quarry area.
4. The site is within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The application site is within a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), notified for its geological interest. There are residential properties adjacent to the northern and eastern edges of the quarry site, the closest dwelling being approximately 60 metres from the application site boundary.
5. A site plan is attached at **Appendix 1**.

The Application

6. The application is for the erection of a building to house an existing stone saw which is presently operational on site. The proposed building is constructed of green plastic sheeting with roller doors on the front elevation.

Consultations

7. **Salisbury District Council (Planning Department)** - no objections.
8. **Salisbury District Council (Environmental Health Officer)** - "I am concerned that this represents an intensification of use of a site that is located in a noise sensitive area and that this application will only serve to increase ambient noise levels which are slowly creeping upwards.

The problem with this application is its location. There are no other significant sources of noise in the locality and background decibel levels are very low, therefore any new source of noise is very apparent and can easily lead to complaints of disturbance from local residents, or even statutory nuisance.

Details of the structure are vague but from what I can gather it is largely a weather shield. If this development is to go ahead it must be redesigned along noise attenuation lines to limit the impact on the local community. The points that need to be considered are:-

- The cutter must be installed so as to prevent the generation of excessive noise, eg resilient mountings.
- Data relating to the frequency spectrum of the noise generated by the machine must be obtained and the shed constructed to maximise attenuation. Generally, the more dense the construction material, the better for absorption of low frequency noise. It should be noted, however, that noise levels change with the type of stone being cut. The plastic roof proposed has no significant noise attenuation value and the sides of the structure are open.
- Orientation and location of the shed on site must be considered relative to existing noise attenuation measures such as the earth bunding.
- The employment of a noise and acoustics consultant is recommended, as this is not the sort of work the applicant will be able to do in-house."

9. **Tisbury Parish Council** - no objections.
10. **Wessex Water** - no objections.
11. **Environment Agency** - no objections.
12. **Railtrack** - "The proposed stone saw building is shown to be located 90 metres from the railway, beyond Quarry Cottages. Provided that the building is constructed in accordance with the application details supplied, the interests of Railtrack should not be affected and I have no comment to make on the proposal."
13. **English Nature** - "I have studied the plans carefully and although the proposals fall within the Upper Chicks Grove Quarry SSSI, there should be no significant risk to the geological interest of the site, as the stone saw appears to be some distance from the rock faces. English Nature, therefore, has no further comments to make."

14. **Council for the Protection of Rural England** - "We object to the further industrialisation of a site that appears to have been steadily extending over a wider area of this sensitive and very publicly visible part of the AONB. The supporting statement from the applicant explains the purpose of the housing as providing saw and operator protection from the weather. Although we are glad to hear that the saw is a particularly quiet running machine (evidence?), the claim that the housing will help to reduce noise levels is at variance with the specification. Were the aim to keep noise levels down, then the choice of plastic sheeting for the walls would seem perverse, as would the roller doors which will no doubt be left open when the weather is reasonable. As for the claim that the building will improve the aesthetic appearance of the working area, this only has a feeble ring of truth thanks to the dismal appearance of the rest of the working area.

Whilst we understand the need for local industries such as this and the benefit they have on the local economy, we believe that insufficient care has been taken to ensure that the expanding site does not become an increasing eyesore in the landscape of the AONB. We would ask that this consideration be high on the agenda when the application is considered and that the applicant be made to conform to certain minimum standards of noise control and aesthetic appearance."

15. **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust** - no response received.
16. **Forestry and Countryside Officer** - "The proposal has minimal impact on the landscape, being screened by its location in the quarry and the boundary trees of the site."
17. **Highway Authority** - no objections.

Publicity

18. The application was advertised on site and in the press. Three letters of representation have been received and are attached at **Appendix 2**.

Representations

19. The following concerns were raised in the letters of representation:-
- (i) Whether the stone saw is presently operational on site.
 - (ii) What conditions will be included in the Schedule if planning permission were to be granted.
 - (iii) Queries regarding restoration time periods.
 - (iv) Concern regarding increased traffic movements arising from the application.

Planning Considerations

20. The application proposes to erect a building to house an existing stone saw presently operational on site.
21. The site is located in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. Although the main part of the quarry is visible from the C24 and footpaths in the area, the application area is screened by bunds and mature trees on the western side, as well as by an existing cutting shed to the north. The southern side houses the recently constructed cutting shed, with mature vegetation on the field line above the geological face. It is therefore considered that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the landscape or on the AONB.
22. There are no highway objections to the application. With regard to the possibility of increased traffic movements stated in a letter of representation, the application does not include a proposal to increase the importation of stone into the quarry for processing. Consequently, there will be no increased lorry movements or resulting air pollution if this application is granted planning permission.
23. One of the main concerns relates to the impact of noise from the quarry on nearby residential properties. Salisbury District Council's Environmental Health Officer raises concerns that this application "represents an intensification of the use of the site." The response is based on the misconception that the stone saw is not presently on site and does not observe that the application is purely for the saw housing. It must be noted that the proposal would locate an existing stone saw, which is at present in the open, within a building, thus reducing noise emanating from the machinery. The roller doors giving access to the saw are located on the southern elevation, facing away from the adjacent residential properties. There is already an existing screening bund and tree belt along the northern and western boundaries which provides a degree of acoustic screening for the quarry.
24. No objections have been raised by the Environment Agency in terms of the impact of the proposal on the water environment. No objections were received from English Nature who stated that the application would not represent a significant risk to the geological interest of the site.
25. Objections were raised by the Council for the Protection of Rural England concerning the visual implications of the saw housing, in addition to the issue of noise which has been addressed in paragraph 23. When considering the aesthetic appearance of the application site, it must be noted that the proposed housing is to be sited within an operational quarry, a site which contains working machinery and stockpiled stone. The proposed materials for the housing comprise of a steel girder frame covered in green plastic sheeting with clear plastic strips on the roof to allow sunlight to penetrate into the working area.
26. Representations have been received with regard to future restoration of the application area. The structure proposed is directly linked to the operation of the quarry. It would therefore be appropriate to seek removal of the saw housing once stone extraction has ceased. A condition to this effect could be attached in the Schedule if permission were to be granted.

27. There has been considerable ongoing concern regarding the level of stone imported into the quarry site for processing, with possible increases in vehicle movements and pressure on the surrounding infrastructure. If permission were granted, this proposal would facilitate more efficient use of the stone saw in all weathers. Thus, it would be prudent to include a condition in the permission Schedule explicitly stating the level of stone imports permitted.

Conclusion: Options Considered

28. It is recognised that Chicks Grove Quarry is an important supplier of local building stone and makes a valuable contribution to the rural economy of the area.
29. The quarry is situated in a very sensitive location within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. It has been designated an SSSI by virtue of its geological importance in terms of Jurassic stratigraphy and palaeontology.
30. The site is adjacent to a number of residential properties. Therefore, it is important that the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on the environment or residential amenity. It is considered that existing landscaping and bunding would reduce the visual impact of the proposed development.
31. The main concerns relate to the impact of noise on residential properties in the locality. Noise impact will be minimised by housing an existing stone saw within the proposed structure and further controls would be imposed by planning conditions.
32. It is therefore considered that there are no overriding planning considerations which would justify a refusal of this application.

Recommendation

33. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-
1. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority or required by the conditions attached to this permission, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details in the submitted planning application S.01.2062 and approved plans CQ/SH/1, CQ/SH/2, CQ/SH/3, CQ/SH/4, CQ/SH/5 and CQ/SH/6.
 2. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority, all fixed plant, the building and areas of hardstanding permitted under this permission shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition within a period of six months from the cessation of stone extraction.
 3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order), no fixed plant or machinery shall be installed, erected, modified or placed within the site without the prior written approval of the Mineral Planning Authority.

4. Any soil or chemical storage tanks on the site shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by oil-tight bund walls. The bunded areas shall be capable of containing at least 110% of a tank's volume and shall enclose all fill and draw pipes.
5. No waste material shall be introduced into the site.
6. Any importation of stone into the quarry site for processing shall not exceed 30 tonnes per annum.
7. Stockpiling shall take place only in areas previously agreed in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority and shall be restricted to a height not exceeding 3 metres above existing ground level.
8. No operations or activities authorised or required by this permission shall be carried out except during the following hours:-

0800 hours to 1800 hours on Monday to Friday and
0800 hours to 1300 hours on Saturday

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

9. Noise from the site operations, including the use of plant and machinery relating to the operations, shall not result in noise levels exceeding 50 dB LAeq 1 hour at the closest noise sensitive property, measured freefield.

Reasons for Recommendation

34. The quarry provides stone for the local market and is an important source of building material for the refurbishment of houses in the locality. It therefore makes a contribution to the local economy, providing some employment.
35. Noise emanating from the existing saw will be reduced as a result of housing the machinery within the proposed structure.

RICHARD J. LANDER

Director of Environmental Services

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

Consultation replies and representations

Environmental impact of the Recommendations contained in this Report:

Paragraphs 21-27