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| Application 12/00056/CM | No: | Ward: Wroxton | Date Valid: 17/01/12 |
| Applicant: | Marshalls Mono Ltd | | |
| Site Address: | Hornton Grounds Quarry | | |

Proposal: Vary conditions 1, 2 and 5 of existing Planning Permission Ref: 06/01117/CM and Condition 80 of existing Planning Permission Ref: 06/01119/CM to allow the following; Replacement of existing substandard portable building with an improved timber panelled building for staff use; Extension of time for the retention of the stone cutting/dressing buildings and conservation yard from 31 December 2013 to 31 December 2023 with subsequent restoration of the site by 31 December 2024; Increase in the amount of stone imported to the site from 4,000 tonnes pa. (OCC ref. MW.0011/12).

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 This consultation from the County Council relates to consents granted for the use of the stone dressing and finishing yard within the former quarry area at Hornton Grounds Quarry. The site is accessed from the A422 (Stratford Road) and is isolated from residential properties. The existing buildings and operations on the site are largely screened from the public domain by existing bunding across the site and the distance from the nearest public vantage point.
- 1.2 The site is currently used for the cutting, dressing and processing of block stone for use in the construction industry and contains a saw shed, storage area and smaller masons-shelters. The stone worked on the site is imported, largely from the quarry at Great Tew by HGV using the local road network.
- 1.3 The proposal currently before the County Council for determination is for the variation of conditions attached to two extant consents to enable the following;
 - replacement of an existing pre-fabricated building with another for staff welfare use
 - the continued use (for an additional ten years) of the stone yard and buildings beyond the current end-date of 2013
 - an increase in the importation of stone for processing from 4000 tonnes/year to 12000 tonnes/year

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 As this application is a County Matter, all publicity has been undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 As this matter is a County Matter, all formal consultations have been undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council.

4. Relevant Planning Policies

- 4.1 PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPS10: Sustainable Waste Management
PPG13: Transport
- 4.2 The South East Plan: Policies BE1, CO4, waste policies
- 4.3 Adopted Cherwell Local Plan: Policies GB1, C7

5. Appraisal

- 5.1 As the proposal is for the variation of the extant consents for three distinct elements of development, these will be addressed in turn. Broadly however, the proposal stands to be considered against the impact of the variation on the original intentions of the conditions, and the impact of the continued development on the character and amenities of the area and highway safety.
- 5.2 The first element of the proposal, the replacement of the existing pre-fabricated building with a similar sized replacement building is to be considered against the visual impact of the proposal on the locally designated Area of High Landscape Value and the wider countryside. The immediate context of the site is already characterised by buildings of a similar scale, nature and function, associated with the former quarrying use and the current processing use. Furthermore within the last twelve months, consent has been granted for the erection of agricultural buildings to the immediate North of this site. Taking this into consideration, the replacement building is considered acceptable.
- 5.3 The second element of the scheme is the continued use of stone yard and the existing buildings on the site. This element is also to be considered against the visual impact of the proposal on the locally designated Area of High Landscape Value and the wider countryside. Again, as in 5.2 above, the yard and buildings are already in this use, and the continuation of this use will not cause any harm to the character or amenity of the area.
- 5.4 The final element of the scheme, the increase in the amount of imported stone from 4000 to 12000 tonnes per year is the key issue in this consultation as it makes the wider site viable and is the reason for the other elements of the proposal.
- 5.5 It is clearly not for the District Council to comment on the acceptability of the proposal in highway safety or convenience terms, as the County Council is the Highway Authority. However, it is appropriate to consider the impact on the surrounding villages and area as a result of a three-fold increase in the amount of stone imported to the site for processing.
- 5.6 The application includes a Transport Statement which sets out that the proposal would lead to six more HGV movements per day (3 trips). The statement also notes that the access to the site and immediate highway network is of a suitable scale and design for traffic movements of this type, having been built to serve the previous quarrying operation. The Transport Statement also notes that the proposed

additional HGV movements would bring the total vehicle movements to 3.5% of the total associated with the [now-ceased] quarrying activity on the site.

- 5.7 The impact of the increase in the scale of operations on this site, and the extension of the use must be balanced against the economic impacts of the scheme. At present 18 staff are employed on site, with 12 more off-site jobs (in servicing and associated trades) dependent on this use. The application sets out that as a result of the closure of other similar local enterprises, and the increase in demand for natural stone products within the local construction industry, the applicants intend to take on 6 apprentice masons, increasing the number of on-site jobs to 24.
- 5.8 In conclusion, it is considered that whilst this proposal may lead to an increase in disturbance arising from a greater number of HGV movements, this harm is outweighed by the economic benefits of the continued use of the site. The isolated nature of the site and the relatively low actual number of vehicle movements also mitigate any increased impact arising from the development. The use and its associated impact on the landscape are well-established, and in the current economic circumstances, the retention of 18 jobs and the possible provision of 6 further jobs weigh significantly in favour of the proposals.
- 5.9 It is therefore recommended that this Council offer no objections to the County Council, as set out below.

6. Recommendation

That the Oxfordshire County Council be advised that this Council has no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of suitable conditions to control environmental impact relating to traffic, noise and dust associated with the continuing use of the site; and providing the County Council is satisfied with the proposal in highway safety and convenience terms.

Cherwell District Council request that they be informed of the outcome of the application once a decision has been made.

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