

**APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION OF CONDITIONS TO WHICH A MINERAL
SITE IS TO BE SUBJECT**

**Environment Act 1995
Section 96 and paragraph 9 of Schedule 13**

Ding Quarry

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

PART 1

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Purpose of this Non-Technical Summary

The aim of this short report is to present, in non-technical language, the findings of a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment that has been undertaken in connection with the proposal to recommence mineral extraction at Ding Quarry.

The full report, known as an Environmental Statement, accompanies the application for the determination of conditions.



Planning permission for mineral extraction at Ding Quarry was granted in 1949. The permitted area for stone extraction extends to some 34 hectares.

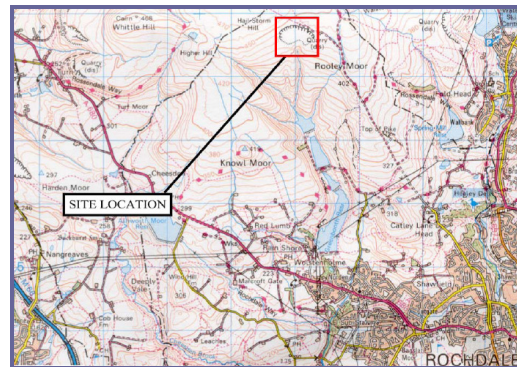
In accordance with the provisions of the Environment Act 1995, the Quarry is classified as being “dormant” and as such mineral extraction cannot recommence until new, modern planning conditions have been approved by the mineral planning authority.

This application is submitted under the relevant sections of the Environment Act 1995 and seeks approval to a scheme of conditions which will apply to the future winning of stone from Ding Quarry.

Background

Ding Quarry is situated some 7 km to the north-west of Rochdale and is accessed via an ancient highway known as Rooley Moor Road.

The site is located on a gentle, south facing slope close to the top of the high moor plateau of Rooley Moor, which is itself part of a large, extensive tract of moorland. The land is generally unenclosed, open, exposed and devoid of settlements, which contrasts sharply with the urbanised moorland fringe and valleys.



Development Proposals

The development proposed will comprise:

- Extraction of stone and associated minerals from the existing, permitted area of quarrying
- The provision of screening and other landscaping and mitigation
- Restoration of the final Quarry void

Stone will be extracted at a rate of up to 750,000 tonnes per annum over a period of 30 years.

Hours of working will be 0600 to 1830 Monday to Friday, and 0600 to 1300 on Saturday. However, no HGV traffic will leave the Quarry before 0700 hours.

Restoration will only utilise unsaleable material arising from the working at the Quarry. No waste or any other restoration material will be imported from elsewhere.

Planning Context and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The purpose of the EIA is to identify the environmental effects of the development and to put forward measures (often referred to as *mitigation*) that will avoid, minimise or offset any negative effects. Comments and observations received from the planning authority and other key organisations have been used to inform the scope and content of the EIA. Environmental studies have been carried out by experts in a wide range of disciplines, and the findings incorporated within an Environmental

Statement (ES) which accompanies the application.

This Non-Technical Summary provides a brief overview of those effects assessed within the ES.

Landscape and Visual

Whilst the proposed development will have an effect on the landscape and visual character of the area, this is a landscape where mineral extraction is already a traditional component of the local character and where the existing site is despoiled in nature.

Overall, the significance of the effect of the development on the visual character of the area is considered to be slight and adverse to neutral during extraction but moderate and beneficial following restoration.

There will be no visual impact on residential properties in the surrounding settlements because of the screening effect of intervening landforms and the long distances from the Quarry.

The development proposals include a substantial number of mitigation measures designed to reduce any potential impacts during extraction including the location of site offices and plant on the existing quarry floor (well below sight lines), the north-east orientation of working and the retention of the existing screening until the final phases.

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It is proposed to restore the site primarily for nature conservation and informal recreation and to recreate areas of acid grassland, heathland, blanket bog, whilst leaving exposed rock faces and other habitats (rock piles) all on a remodelled landform designed to be integrated into the surrounding landscape.

The restored landform will be a recreation of a “head” to an incised valley with occasional gritstone edges forming a natural-looking extension to Ding Clough.

Air Quality

The potential for quarrying to cause a nuisance from dust has been considered.

Dust can be regarded as a problem when it accumulates on surfaces such as windows, paintwork, vehicles and washing. Of course, dust will be produced by activities other than from the proposed development, for example from farming operations and road traffic in general.

It is important to realise that simply because an operation may be seen as being “dusty” this does not necessarily mean that any dust produced will affect the local community. Weather conditions such as wind speed and direction, wet or dry days, are a major factor.

The predominant wind direction is from the south-west quadrant.

The nearest properties to the Quarry are in excess of 2 km away and in the main located to the south of the site.

The assessment concludes that not only are potential receptors located in a direction less likely to be affected by wind-borne dust but that they are in any event so far distant that the likelihood of properties being adversely affected is negligible.

Measures will be taken to ensure that dust is kept to a minimum, for example, haul roads will be kept damp during dry weather and the speed of vehicles within the Quarry will be kept to a minimum.

Noise

“Noise” has been defined as sound which is undesired by the recipient. The effects of noise can be varied and complicated, including disturbance of work, leisure or sleep. Some individuals will be more sensitive to noise than others.

Because of the remoteness of the Quarry, there will be no adverse impact on residential properties from excessive noise arising from the extraction and processing operations.

As part of the assessment of the potential impact of noise, measurements of existing noise levels were made at four receptors that are representative of properties lying along those public highways to be utilised by traffic travelling to and from the Quarry.

The assessment is based on Department of transport recommendations as regards traffic noise and concludes that increases in noise will not be significant other than at the northern end of Ings Lane where the increase may be marginal.

Flora and Fauna

Whilst all existing habitats and vegetation will be lost within the permitted area for mineral extraction much of the area comprises former quarry workings and stockpiles where the bare ground and sparse grassy areas are more impoverished than the undisturbed areas elsewhere across the vast expanse of moorland surrounding the Quarry. These areas within the Quarry are of low botanical interest and the loss is not considered to have a significant ecological impact.

There will be a loss of some small areas of undisturbed land within the permitted boundary, but this should be taken in the context of the entire moorland area of this part of the South Pennines.

Loss of habitats within the Quarry may displace birds that breed there, but only a small number of common and widespread moorland species were recorded, and the loss is regarded as not being significant in the context of the wider moorland setting.

Appropriate mitigation will be taken to minimise impact both within the Quarry area and the surrounding moorland and the final restoration is designed to provide additional and varied botanical interest and wildlife habitat.

Archaeology

Cultural heritage is a man-made resource that should be protected. An effect on heritage may be considered significant if it impinges on an historic town, an ancient monument, special historic or cultural landscapes or areas of archaeological importance.

Within the permitted quarrying area, extraction would impact on those features associated with the previous working of stone from this site.

In addition, any areas of undisturbed peat that might be stripped during the course of extraction could contain relics associated with past eras.

In mitigation, prior to working a photographic record would be produced of industrial remains within the Quarry, and before any previously undisturbed areas of peat are stripped, then a detailed programme of hand augering and test pitting will be undertaken.

Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The existing ground and surface water regime has been considered and a detailed assessment undertaken of the likely impact (if any) that quarrying might have.

The assessment was based on field research and monitoring of ground water levels from boreholes drilled within the Quarry.

Water quality was also assessed and samples analysed from three locations around the site.

It should be noted that quarrying has already occurred and that the re-opening of the site will generally only involve a deepening of the existing void, with only marginal lateral extension.

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Quarrying will “cut through” several beds of sandstone, the upper beds being recognised as minor aquifers.

As the excavation deepens, any groundwater will be intercepted and diverted away from operational areas into sumps where the water will be allowed to “settle”, allowing any fines to sink, and the clean water will then be discharged into Ding Clough. This will be controlled under licence from the Environment Agency.

Surface water will be intercepted by way of ditches around the periphery of the Quarry.

Traffic

Environmental implications of traffic have been assessed having regard to existing traffic data and accident records relating to those roads which will form the main access to and from the Quarry.

The assessment has been based on an assumed daily output of 2,600 tonnes which equates to 130 two-way trips during a full day (that is, Monday to Friday).

Overall, the traffic assessment concludes that the addition of the projected numbers of HGV's will not have a significant impact on the performance of the existing highway network, either in terms of safety or capacity.

Conclusions

The re-opening of Ding Quarry will enable the continued extraction of high quality, and much sought after, aggregate and building stone.

A full and detailed EIA has been undertaken into every aspect of the development and where impacts have been identified, appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposals.

It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in environmental terms.

What happens next?

Prior to making a decision on the application for determination of new conditions, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council will consult and seek comments and advice from a wide range of statutory consultees as well as local communities. Any individuals who wish to make any comments are welcomed to do so.

The application, including the full Environmental Statement, will be made available by the Council for examination by the public.

Paper copies may be purchased from Carter Jonas LLP (at a cost of £150 each) or provided on CD ROM free of charge.

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