

## Application PA16/10746 Extension of Greystone Quarry

This application is for the lateral extension of the existing Greystone Quarry at Lawhitton, the consolidation and regularisation of existing development and associated ancillary development. The amount of reserve minerals would increase from 5 to 10 million tons and the extraction life of the quarry from 16 to 49 years.

The proposal is shown on plan ES-0002 [Appendix \*]. As can be seen on the plan, the Tamar Valley discovery trail would need to be diverted along a route that generally follows the boundary of the extended area.

*According to the applicant's submission, stone is currently extracted by increasing the working depth of the quarry within the established extraction area. This is now yielding only the most valuable premium high performance stone [dolerite]. It is this stone that is scarce within the area, and of Local, Regional and National Importance. 1.12 The dolerite resource extends to the south and investigations undertaken have identified an economically exploitable resource of stone, lying within an area extending to approximately 5.5 hectares adjacent to the existing southern quarry face. In order to be able to exploit this resource, access to this area is required to be gained from the existing quarry. Should the reserves within the existing quarry be fully worked as currently consented, access to this area would be 'cut off', preventing the working of this area and effectively sterilising the resource.*

The Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty adjoins the south eastern boundary of the existing quarry with the proposed extension area just falling within its north eastern boundary. The site is within the Inny Valley and Lawhitton Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and within the Greystone Quarry Mineral Consultation Area. The Dartmoor National Park borders the eastern margin of the AONB where it extends within the adjoining county of Devon.

The applicants state that: *the extension to the site requires the removal of soils and overburden, which are proposed to be utilised to create attractive permanent screening landform features to the east and south of the extension area as well as within an area within the western extent of the existing quarry for which permission already exists.*

According to the applicant, the proposed development *enables the consideration of a revised and enhanced, landscape scale restoration proposal for the site, whilst retaining the objectives to the scheme already approved, [namely]*

- To establish a landform together with land use features and elements capable of integration and enhancement of the local landscape character and its wider setting;*
- To enhance the value of the site for geological and biodiversity conservation as well as landscape and amenity interests and make connections into the local footpath network;*
- To create new wildlife habitats throughout the site that can be sustainably managed and maintained to promote and increase the potential for biodiversity.*

*Upon completion of quarrying, all of the processing equipment and factory buildings will be removed and native tree species will be planted in the area which complements the existing wooded Tamar*

*valley. The main quarry area will be restored to a valuable biodiversity and geodiversity habitat including a water body with scattered scrub and rocky faces.*

Other than for routine maintenance or in an emergency, the hours of operation would be:

- between 6.00 and 18.00 hours Monday-Fridays

- between 6.00 and 13.00 hours on Saturdays

There would be no working on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays

The hours of operation of the coating plant would be similar but with a start time of 5am.

### **Highways and Traffic**

The applicants state that: *the proposed development provides for the continued extraction of mineral at the current rate of output. As a result, the proposed development will not result in any change to the current number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) accessing and egressing the site and that:*

*The main access route to the Quarry is from the west via the A388 and B3362, which provides a direct access to the Site.*

The Transport Assessment shows that:

*69% of HGV trips travel westbound along the B3362 and turn right onto the A388 travelling in a northbound direction towards the A30. Of these, 36% of the vehicles turn left onto the A30 towards the west of Cornwall, 25% turn right towards Devon and 8% keep travelling north towards Launceston. The remaining 31% of the vehicle trips turn left at the junction of the B3362 with the A388 to travel southbound towards Plymouth.*

*Only a minimal number of vehicle trips travel via Greystone Bridge. These only take place for specific deliveries in the nearby area and where no other suitable routes can be found. At present, the number of vehicle trips generated by the Quarry overall (around 96 two-way trips per day), represents less than 1% of average annual daily traffic on the A388, and a negligible proportion of the flows experienced on the A30.*

The applicants also propose to close the lane bounding the Site to the south in order to allow the access to the extension area. They state that:

*This lane is narrow in nature and carries very low volumes of traffic. It does not allow two vehicles passing each other except from a few limited informal passing places that provide access to neighbouring properties.*

*This lane forms part of the Tamar Valley AONB Discovery Trail and due to the lack of maintenance and narrow sections it does not allow for the safe and convenient passing of a vehicle and a pedestrian. Visibility is also restricted due to lack of maintenance and a collision took place at the junction of this lane with the B3226.*

*It is proposed to replace this lane by providing a Restricted Byway which would improve the circulation of walkers and would enhance this section of the Discovery Trail by providing a safe route with a view point to the Quarry.*

*There a number of alternative routes to the use of the existing lane which are more convenient and safer to be used by vehicle traffic, with minimal increases in journey time.*

## **Landscape Effects**

Overall the applicants consider:

*that the proposed development would result in moderate slight adverse landscape effects on local landscape character and the AONB but at a localised level only. There would be moderate adverse effects on the visual amenity on the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail and the tranquillity of the area but at a localised level only. Other designated sites and receptors would be unaffected.*

## **Visual Effects**

The applicants state that:

*Adverse visual effects of a moderate significance or higher relate principally to the construction of the Eastern Screen Bund during the Initial works (0-3 years). The ZSV of the initial works covers an area of approximately 86ha and is limited to the extension site and the valley opposite around Hardstone Farm, with an outlier to the west of Bradstone.*

*In later phases and at restoration the majority of the effects reduce to Moderate – Slight significance and are beneficial in nature. The ZSV of adverse effects reduces significantly to 18ha and is limited to the area immediately associated with the extension site.*

[Note: A ZSV is a Zone of Significant Visibility from which a proposed development is likely to draw the eye of the casual observer.]

*Of the 12 viewpoints assessed one (VP 7) has no view of the site. Of the 11 remaining viewpoints assessed all but VP 8-10 would experience moderate to substantial moderate adverse effects. Only VPs 8 and 9, immediately adjacent to the extension area, would experience very substantial adverse effects.*

*With the exception of VPs 8 and 9 in all viewpoints assessed the significance and nature of effect of the proposed extension reduces significantly after the Initial Works (0-3 years), often resulting in a beneficial effect over the following years as the mitigation planting establishes and complements the wooded landscape character of the valley sides.*

*With all viewpoints that experience a view of the site the significance of effect reduces over time as the mitigation planting matures.*

[Note: photos of the various viewpoints can be found at <http://docs.planning.cornwall.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=PA16/10746>]

## **Noise**

The applicants state that:

*the proposed development will bring extraction operations and overburden placement closer than currently permitted operations to residential properties.*

*The calculated site noise levels for the extension and processing plant operations (using an apparent Sound Power Level of 118 dB LWA for the drill rig) result in all of the eight dwellings selected being below the suggested site noise limit at dwellings of 50 dB LAeq, 1 hour, free field for the period 06.00 to 18.00 hours.*

*The depth of soils and lezant slate varies typically between 10 m and 15 m before the dolerite is encountered and it may be that the drill rig with an apparent Sound Power Level of 127 dB LWA could be used for the operational phase at the uppermost position of the dolerite. This cannot be predicted with certainty at this stage and can be tested during operations in the southern extension area by way of measurement of the drill rig in use and further calculations and observations at the dwellings.*

## **Blasting**

Blasting is currently controlled at the site by conditions restricting the timings of blasts undertaken at the site and the measured ground vibration as a result of blasts not exceeding a peak particle velocity of 8.5mm/second at vibration sensitive buildings or residential properties. A monitoring scheme is also in place.

The applicants state that:

*The blasting regime in the proposed extension area will be similar to that used in the existing quarry. The optimum blast design may vary from blast to blast and will necessarily be decided by the quarry operator with reference to the site specific conditions and in order to comply with the recommended vibration criteria.*

*Current blasting practices at the site ensure that compliance with the recommended vibration criteria is achieved at all inhabited property.*

## **Dust**

The applicants state that:

*Dust emissions from extant extraction and processing under the consented working scheme are assessed to be limited by the scale of extraction and the extraction process. There are no outstanding complaints regarding dust at this quarry. Similar low levels of emissions can be expected from extraction within the southern extension area.*

*the potential for fugitive dust emissions from the excavation of mineral in the proposed southern extension and to deepen the existing void at Greystone Quarry should be minimal due to extraction being undertaken at depth. However, topsoil and overburden removal, along with the landscape*

*development around the site perimeter have the potential to create an impact at receptors to the south and southeast.*

Although this site is in Cornwall and the Parish Council is not a statutory consultee, a local resident has asked for this matter to be considered. The proposal will extend the life of the quarry considerably and thereby allow the extraction of a large amount of high quality minerals. The Parish Council is requested to determine whether or not the likely environmental impact of this proposal on the amenities of its area is such that it wishes to make representations to Cornwall Council regarding this application.