

Public Meeting - 15 December 2007

Oxted Chalk Pit

Public Meeting – 15 December 2007

'Questions and Answers' Note

Produced by Surrey County Council Planning Service

Background Information

Planning History

- 1 Oxted Chalk Pit is an operational chalk quarry that has been active for more than 150 years producing calk and agricultural lime. Planning permission was first granted in 1947 under an Interim Development Order (IDO), which included the infilling of the quarry with inert waste materials. The Planning & Compensation Act 1991 introduced new procedures for dealing with permissions for winning and working of minerals or the depositing of mineral waste, originally granted under IDOs. The 1991 Act required applications for registration of permissions to be made to the Mineral Planning Authority (Surrey CC in this case) by March 1992 or the permission expired. Such an application (ref. TA92/0070) was made in respect of Oxted Chalkpit and registered on 14 May 1992. In 1993 the application for modern conditions under the 1991 Act was registered under ref. TA93/0765, which were approved in June 1997. Under these conditions there were no highway constraints in terms of vehicle numbers, which means there is no limit in planning terms on the number of vehicles exiting the site with chalk or entering the site with waste.
- 2 The quarry may continue to operate until 2042 although there is currently estimated to be a life of some thirty years in terms of infilling. The conditions applying to the planning permission can be reviewed in 2012.

Recent Planning Submissions

- 3 In July 2007, an Aftercare Management Strategy, and Restoration Scheme, were submitted pursuant to Condition 24 (a) and (b) of Permission TA/93/0765, dated 11th June 1997. The schemes were submitted in respect of landscape and restoration. Condition 24 (a) required a scheme for the removal of plant growth and prevention of regrowth from the old kilns. Condition 24 (b) required a scheme for the maintenance of landscape woodland and of the approved restoration.
- 4 In September 2007, a minor revision to the approved restoration scheme, involving the reconfiguration of an existing bund along the eastern boundary with Chalkpit Lane to the south of the upper site access, was submitted. The bund is to be planted with trees to assist in screening the site. In addition, the applicant wishes to change the phased working of extraction, working phase 4 on the western boundary next, which will enable the progressive restoration returning in an eastward direction toward the site entrance. The applicant has stated that this change would be a more logical and efficient way of working and restoring the site. Additional wheel cleaning facilities have also been submitted, which consist of a mobile wheel wash trough placed along the internal access road between the disused lime kilns and weighbridge. The trough will help clear excess debris from the wheels and chassis of HGVs, assisting the current fixed wheelwash facility at the site entrance. All

these amending details of working and restoration are required to be approved under Conditions 13 and 26 of planning permission ref: TA93/0765 dated 11 June 1997.

- 5 The applicant has also submitted details of a soil analysis, which is required following the placement of soils as part of the restoration of the phases, pursuant to Condition 27(e) of planning permission ref: TA93/0765 dated 11 June 1997.

Planning Policy Designations

- 6 The quarry lies in the Green Belt and Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and adjacent to the Woldingham and Oxted Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Environment Agency (EA) and Waste Management Licence / Pollution Prevention & Control Permit

- 7 The EA is responsible for implementing the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) Regulations where waste disposal takes place on land. In this case the Quarry Operator holds a permit which allows the deposit of up to 100,000 tonnes of inert waste in any calendar year in accordance with a working plan which involves the engineering of cells and the progressive infilling of the site. The EA will monitor and enforce these requirements.
- 8 The EA issued a modified permit to the current operator in May 2007.

Questions and Answers

- a) **Who will determine a planning application for a new access and haul route?**

The County Council is the determining authority for minerals development under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) - see the information sheet for commenting on a planning application.

- b) **When will a planning application be submitted?**

The operator is in pre application discussions with Surrey Officers at present. Traffic surveys are proposed for early in the New Year. A planning application would have to be accompanied by appropriate supporting information dealing with environmental, ecological and transportation issues. The date of submission will depend on the progress in assembling the data.

- c) **Who will be consulted if a planning application is submitted?**

The CPA will consult a number of statutory and other consultees including the Environment Agency and the District Council. The application will be publicised and local residents invited to comment.

d) Is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) required for development at the site under the Town and Country Planning Process?

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 apply to development carried out under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Where development falls within a 'sensitive' area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) the proposal must be screened for the need for EIA. Where a proposal affects a 'sensitive area' an EIA is more likely where it would be likely to have significant effects on the special character of the AONB and/or the adjoining SSSI.

e) Was the Environment Agency (EA) required to carry out EIA when it re-issued the PPC Permit?

The EA is not required to carry out an EIA, when issuing or modifying a licence or permit, as these procedures are carried out under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

f) Who did the EA consult when the PPC Permit was reissued?

The EA consulted SCC, Tandridge DC, English Nature, the Foods Standards Agency and the East Surrey PCT. The EA also placed public notices in the London Gazette and the County Border News as required in the Regulations.

The EA is responsible for the issue of the permit and the terms contained therein. Government Guidance requires that the operation of the planning and PPC regimes take account of each other, but should not duplicate controls.

g) Can the PPC Permit specify vehicle routeing?

No the EA do not have the powers to require this.

h) Can the County Planning Authority impose routeing conditions on the operator?

The CPA has no power to impose a restriction retrospectively.

The submission of a new planning application provides the opportunity to impose further controls on a development where planning permission is granted provided that it is relevant to the proposal and reasonable. A legal agreement can be used to restrict routeing and this may be a requirement depending on the level and direction of the traffic.

i) Which is the lead document in defining what can take place at the site?

The planning permission is the lead document. Activities specified in the waste permit should not take place unless detailed in the planning permission.

j) What would be the benefits of a new access?

There would be a benefit to residents in Oxted if HGV numbers can be reduced through the village and on other local roads. The consequence of redirecting traffic to the north will need to be assessed. There may be a balance to be struck in terms of the overall benefits to amenity in the local area. Planning permission will not be

granted if it gives rise to an unacceptable impact that cannot be ameliorated in a reasonable manner.

k) What works would be required within the site?

A suitably graded haul route would need to be constructed to allow HGV's to climb from the quarry floor to The Ridge. This would involve the formation of an embankment, probably following the eastern boundary of the site. The haul route could be a single trackway possibly controlled by lights and with passing bays to allow two way traffic. Alternatively, the road could be a double trackway. In addition other infrastructure such as wheel cleaning and a weighbridge may be required. The development should be landscaped.

l) Would works be required to the highway in constructing a new access to The Ridge?

Without further information it is difficult to be specific, however there may well be the need for passing bays at some point and for the highway to be made up to strengthen the surface.

m) Who would pay for this work?

The quarry operator.

n) Is there any other alternative to a new access onto The Ridge

There is no possibility of accessing the M25 direct given the policy of the Highways Agency. Other potential routes would involve using land not within the control of the quarry operator and therefore do not appear to be practical options.

o) What would happen with any future planning application?

The CPA must determine a planning application if made in a valid form. If the CPA refuses planning permission, the applicant has the right of appeal to the Secretary of State.