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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

1.1.1 On behalf of the Burghley House Preservation Trust Limited, The Trustees for the Will of the late 6th Marquess of Exeter and with the consent of Corus a planning application is being submitted in respect of an extension to an existing planning consent for the working of ironstone and overlying minerals near Wakerley, Northamptonshire. Mineral Surveying Services Limited have been commissioned to prepare the relevant planning application and this Written Statement sets out in detail the provisions of the planning application as Document 1 of the total submission to the Mineral Planning Authority. In association with the planning application, and under current planning legislation, an environmental assessment of the development is required and The Environmental Statement comprises Document 2 of the total submission. The environmental studies cover both the original planning consent area now proposed for extraction and the extension area forming the subject of this application.

1.1.2 The original planning consent for mineral working was issued on 21st November 1962 and under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 the consent has been classified as an Active Phase 1 site. A revised scheme of working was submitted to the Northamptonshire County Council for the currently consented site in late 1997 and discussions have subsequently taken place in relation to a voluntary limit for mineral working within the extant consent area. It is now suggested that in exchange for the surrender of part of the presently permitted area an extension to the remaining workings be allowed.

1.1.3 This application comprises a comprehensive package of measures aimed at mitigating the impact of the renewed quarry operations upon the local environment and community. The proposals are accompanied by a comprehensive scheme for the restoration of the whole site to agriculture, woodland and nature conservation afteruses.

1.1.4 In formulating the proposals for development each area of consideration has been systematically and carefully examined by a specialist team skilled in environmental matters prior to final site design. This philosophy has ensured that the proposals outlined are designed in a wholly environmentally sensitive manner.

1.1.5 In addition to it's own expertise Mineral Surveying Services Limited has employed independent consultants to carry out relevant areas of environmental study and to provide key information and advise on the development proposals. Additionally, information has been drawn from the extensive data base of the Applicant's own records.

1.1.6 The principal aim of the planning application and associated Environmental Statement (Document 2) is to provide the Officers and Members of the Local

Authority, and other Statutory Consultees, with clear and comprehensive information to assist them in the determination of the application. Additionally, it provides members of the general public, and other interested parties, with information on matters of interest to them. For the sake of completeness, and a comprehensive understanding of the applicant's proposals, both documents should be read together.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The proposed Wakerley Quarry is located approximately 0.5 kilometres south-west of the village of Wakerley in the administrative area of Northamptonshire County Council. For reference purposes the site may be found located centrally at National Grid Ref: SP 945978 as shown on the Location Plan No. 1.

1.2.2 The total area covered by the original consent extends to some 306 hectares whilst the total area now proposed for mineral extraction, and associated development, extends to some 117.8 hectares of land. Of this some 56.9 hectares has the benefit of approval for mineral working under the provisions of the extant planning consent whilst this application covers the proposed extension and new quarry access road being approximately 60.9 hectares in extent. The northern boundary of the site is formed by retained farmland, lying south of the village of Wakerley as indicated on the accompanying Location Plan. The western boundary is formed by farmland and the former quarried areas, the southern site boundary by retained forestry and the eastern boundary by agricultural land and forestry.

1.2.3 The nearest properties are situated at Wakerley some 500 metres north of the proposed site boundary, The Bungalows situated approximately 1300 metres south-west of the site boundary and a property situated approximately 800 metres to the south of the site and known as Town Wood Farm. Other settlements in the locality are Barrowden approximately 1.3 kilometres north, Shotley approximately 1.6 kilometres west, Harringworth approximately 1.9 kilometres west and Laxton approximately 1.3 kilometres south.

1.2.4 Details of the land ownership, the currently approved extraction area and the application boundary, are shown on the Site Plan No. 2 and confirm that all of the land necessary for the proposed development is in the control of the Applicant Charities.

1.3 The Structure of the Application

1.3.1 This application is submitted in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which requires matters governing mineral extraction to be determined by Northamptonshire County Council.

1.3.2 The Written Statement provides the key data relating to the scope and formulation of the proposals.

THE APPLICANT CHARITY

2.1 General

2.1.1 The Burghley House Preservation Trust Limited is a Charity whose core objective is the conservation and showing to the public of Burghley House and its collection of works of art. The Charity endowment includes a wide range of investment property owned and managed for the purpose of endowing the core objective.

2.1.2 The Charity presently employs some 60 full time staff and a similar number of regular part time and seasonal workers.

2.1.3 There are two existing mineral operating sites within the Estate land holdings and these provide further employment by way of subcontract work to local service industries and substantial use of the local transport industry.

3 SITE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

3.1 General

3.1.1 The original permission controlling mineral development at the site was granted on 21st November 1962 incorporating the working of ironstone and overlying minerals.

3.1.2 A copy of the consent is attached at Appendix 1.

3.1.3 The Applicant considers that the proposals for a reactivation and extension of quarry operations will have no adverse effect upon the localised environment and this will be demonstrated by the details contained within this statement and its supporting Environmental Impact Assessment.

3.1.4 The following statement, and accompanying plans, amplify the matters referred to in the planning application forms giving comprehensive details of the development proposed.

4 CONCEPT OF THE SCHEME

4.1 General

4.1.1 The reserves of limestone, lying within the proposed extension area, will be extracted on a progressive basis, and in conjunction with adjacent reserves under the provisions of the present planning consent governing quarry development, over a period of some 45 years. The extraction proposed is dependent upon the level of output from the site which is anticipated to average some 250,000 tonnes per annum.

4.1.2 At the earliest practical opportunity, having regard to the ongoing extractive operations, the applicants will undertake the progressive restoration of the site by the landscaping of worked out areas to agriculture, woodland and conservation uses by the respreading of on-site quarry waste products, subsoils and soils. It is not proposed that any additional materials will be imported to the site for restoration purposes.

4.1.3 The principle elements of the development are listed below:

- There is no adverse impact upon landscape and visual amenity resulting from the development proposals.
- There are no adverse impacts to areas of ecological or geological interest lying within or adjacent to the site.
- There are no anticipated implications to historic buildings or significant adverse implications to archaeology arising from the proposed development.
- There are no adverse hydrological implications arising from the proposed development.
- There are no adverse flood risk implications arising from the proposed development.
- There are no adverse noise implications arising from the proposed development.
- There are no adverse air quality implications arising from the proposed development.
- There will be no increase in traffic upon the local villages generated by the quarry working. A new purpose built surfaced quarry haulage road will be constructed linking the proposed quarry development to the existing road network serving the site. This will give an environmentally acceptable distribution of lorry traffic associated with the development.

5 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 General

5.1.1 This section sets out the planning policy context for the proposed development at Wakerley, Northamptonshire. It assesses the proposal against all levels of planning policy from national and regional guidance to specific county and local policies.

5.2 National Planning Guidance

Mineral Planning Guidance Notes (MPS's and MPG's)

5.2.1 Currently, primary guidance on minerals planning is provided by MPS1 Planning and Minerals (November 2006). This document sets out the Government's national planning policy on minerals planning matters and provides advice to both Mineral Planning Authorities and the minerals industry on the objectives for minerals planning and a range of policy considerations that should be considered by Mineral Planning Authorities when carrying out their functions in relation to the preparation of development plans and development control. The details of planning policy in relation to aggregates may be found in Annex 1 and outlines the policy objectives for aggregates. These are;

- To encourage the use, wherever practicable, of alternative aggregates in preference to primary aggregate;
- To encourage the supply of marine-dredged sand and gravel to the extent that environmentally acceptable sources can be identified and exploited, within the principle of sustainable development;
- To make provision for the remainder of supply to be met from land-won sand and gravel and crushed rock.

In relation to local planning the guidance states that Mineral Planning Authorities should make provision for sub-regional apportionment of the current National and Regional Guidelines for aggregates provision. Such provision should take the form of specific sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search identified in local development documents.

5.2.2 In relation to landbanks, and the continuity of supply, MPS1 advises that Mineral Planning Authorities should use the length of landbank in their areas as an indicator when new permission for aggregates extraction are likely to be needed. This suggests 7 years for sand and gravel and longer periods, at least 10 years, for crushed rock.

5.2.3 In association with MPS1 a "practice guide" has also been published which should be read alongside MPS1 and offers examples and principles of good practice and background information to Mineral Planning Authorities when

preparing development plans or considering applications for mineral development. This document has also been considered relevant in the formulation of this planning application.

5.2.4 An additional aid to minerals planning is provided by MPS2 “Controlling and Mitigating the Environmental Effects of Minerals Extraction in England”. This document sets out the policies and considerations in relation to the environmental effects of minerals extraction that Government expects Mineral Planning Authorities to follow when preparing development plans and in considering applications for mineral development. The relevant policy considerations in relation to environmental impact assessment, development documents and policies, pre-application discussions and community consultation and involvement have been taken into account in the formulation of this planning application and associated Environmental Assessment.

5.3 County Planning Policy

5.3.1 At present Northamptonshire is covered, for mineral planning purposes, by the Northamptonshire Minerals Local Plan Review, which was adopted by the Northamptonshire County Council in May 2006. The plan sets out detailed policies for the control of mineral working which apply throughout the county and specific proposals for the development or protection of particular areas of land. The plan is divided into a number of Chapters which deal with specific elements of the plan and considers the scale, location and type of mineral development that will take place in the county during the period to 2016 and beyond.

5.3.2 Nationally minerals and waste local plans will be replaced by Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks documents and Northamptonshire is currently progressing through the early stages of these plans. These are unlikely to have been adopted during the consideration of this planning application but the applicants have made representation in respect of the Wakerley site in support of the new framework documentation.

5.3.3 In terms of the approved Minerals Local Plan Chapter 5 deals with the provision for mineral extraction in Northamptonshire and covers the need for landbanks and a continued supply of minerals. In terms of crushed rock as aggregate the plan identifies permitted reserves and includes the planning consent at Wakerley as an “allocated site”, where the Mineral Planning Authority is satisfied that the mineral is capable of being worked without serious harm to interests of acknowledged importance. It then comments on the fact that issues of detail will be dealt with when planning applications are forthcoming.

5.3.4 Chapter 7 sets out the Mineral Planning Authorities requirements in terms of the preparation and submission of planning applications, including the circumstances in which planning conditions and legal agreements may be sought. This chapter also comments on the need for pre-application discussion in advance of formal planning applications and this has been the

case for the Wakerley Quarry proposals. It then comments on the level of information which should be supplied with an application and the need for proposals, likely to have a significant environmental effect, to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

5.3.5 This submission takes full account of the matters highlighted by the planning authority and follows a scoping of the general proposals by the County Council.

5.3.6 Relevant policies are set out in the Minerals Local Plan and comments are given below as to their relevance to the development proposed.

5.3.7 Policy 12 deals with development outside permitted and allocated sites and suggests several criteria one being that proposals will not be permitted unless they involve amending the boundaries of existing operations and would result in significant net environmental benefits without significantly increasing the level of permitted reserves. It is considered that in this case the surrender of mineral reserves close to the village of Wakerley is a significant net benefit and the development can be undertaken in a sustainable manner and without detriment to the localised environment.

5.3.8 Policy 14 deals with reclamation and restoration proposals for mineral extraction and allows for an appropriate landform and progressive restoration. In this case the landform has been specifically designed to blend with surrounding land contours and will allow a return of the land to beneficial agricultural, woodland and conservation uses on a progressive basis.

5.3.9 Policy 15 deals with the provision of buffer zones to ensure an adequate boundary between mineral working and other established forms of development, such as dwellings, businesses, schools, community facilities, nature conservation and sites of historic importance. Early discussions with the local communities at Wakerley set out a framework for an appropriate buffer zone for the application. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposals contained within this application, and it's associated environmental statement, confirm that there are no adverse impacts in terms of all relevant areas of consideration within this policy.

5.3.10 Policy 16 deals with the introduction of mineral processing facilities and criteria for minimising the impact on the localised environment. In this case the plant will be of a low level design, sited within the excavations and the application takes account of adequate environmental screening to minimise the impact of the proposed plant upon the locality.

5.3.11 Policy 18 deals with the management of traffic and possible traffic management agreements with mineral operators. The removal of mineral from the application site has been a particular concern to the local liaison group and all mineral traffic will travel to and from the site via a new purpose built quarry access road specifically designed to minimise the impact of traffic on the local communities. All vehicle movements will be safely accommodated

into the existing highway network and it is considered that all relevant policy considerations have been fully satisfied.

5.3.12 Policy 20 deals with designated biodiversity sites and in formulation of the current proposals the application has been specifically designed to avoid localised areas of national or local ecological importance.

5.3.13 Policy 21 deals with protected species and the ecological study, undertaken in conjunction with this application, ensures that all relevant precautions will be taken to monitor and protect species of acknowledged importance.

5.3.14 Policy 22 deals with measures to protect and enhance features which are important for biodiversity and geodiversity and the restoration proposals submitted with this application are considered to adequately address such issues.

5.3.15 Policy 23 covers issues in relation to the best and most versatile agricultural land. In association with the application a full soils survey has been undertaken and this confirms that the site does not impact upon land classed as best and most versatile. However, the ongoing use of the land for agriculture is recognised and the restoration proposals include a return of the majority of the site to agricultural uses.

5.3.16 Policy 25 deals with mineral extraction in the context of public rights of way and the phased working of the site will ensure that there is no adverse impact in terms of maintaining the existing public rights of way which affect the site.

5.3.17 Policies 26 and 27 consider the impact of development on water resources and flood risk. The Environmental Statement includes specific studies in relation to these two areas of consideration and concludes that there are no adverse impacts as a result of the development proposed.

5.3.18 Policy 28 deals with the impact of mineral working on local amenity and includes criteria to deal with noise, vibration, dust, lighting, air quality, visual intrusion and the hours of operation. The applicants fully understand the importance of maintaining local amenity and the Environmental Statement contains specific studies which deal with matters of acknowledged importance in the context of this application.

5.3.19 Policy 31 covers the criteria which should be considered in the imposition of conditions to regulate mineral development. The applicants recognise the need for the need to control ongoing mineral development and that any new permissions will contain the latest planning conditions designed to adequately regulate quarry development.

5.3.20 Policy 32 covers the need for planning obligations, also known as Section 106 or legal agreements, and recognises that there may be certain matters which require the completion of legal agreements. If these are considered necessary in the context of this submission the applicants are willing to enter into

appropriate legal agreements under the provisions of Town and Country planning legislation.

5.3.21 Policy 34 refers to the need for old minerals permissions to be reviewed and indeed this application stems from an application for modern conditions originally submitted to the County Council in October 1997.

5.3.22 The County Council is presently producing emerging minerals and waste policy in accordance with national planning policy guidelines and is preparing a new Minerals and Waste Development Framework. The proposed site has specifically been identified as a future area for limestone extraction in the draft Plan and this reaffirms the acceptability of the site in overall waste planning terms.

5.3.23 This application is also supported by a planning “design” statement which addresses the requirements of the Mineral Planning Authority by way of supplemental planning guidance concerning good practice measures and the principles for the design of minerals and waste development.

6 SITE GEOLOGY

6.1 Regional Geology

6.1.1 The regional solid geology comprises a vertically extensive sequence of sedimentary deposits of Jurassic Age. A summary of these strata is shown below:

6.1.2 Oxford Clay is the most recent of the Jurassic strata present in the region and occurs some 2.5 km to the east of the Application Area. The Great and Inferior Oolite Series constitute the majority of the solid geology to the east of the Application Area, whereas the Upper Liassic Clay predominates to its west. The sub-horizontal dip of all the strata is such that the distribution of formations at outcrop and sub-crop is governed largely by elevation: Liassic Clays occurring at lower elevations whereas the limestone sequence occurs at higher elevations in the east. Liassic Clays occur in valley bottoms.

6.1.3 The Lincolnshire Limestone comprises the economic mineral at the proposed Wakerley Quarry.

6.1.4 Superficial deposits are generally sparse within the region. The most laterally persistent superficial deposit is Boulder Clay which occurs on the highest sections of interfluve areas. The regional geology is extracted from BGS sheets 157 and 143.

6.1.5 The Great and Inferior Oolite Series outcrop extensively on higher ground within the region. However, all but the Northampton Sand are absent to the east of eastings 89-90. Exposures of Northampton Sand occur at higher elevations to the west of this line and have historically been worked for iron ore manufacture. The closest such workings occur immediately to the north and west of the disused Spanhoe Quarry, where an area of over 0.5 km^2 is shown on the geological map (Sheet 157) as having been worked.

6.1.6 The BGS map indicates that the regional dip is towards the east-southeast and is very shallow to sub-horizontal.

6.1.7 Details of the local geology are well known from published and unpublished data sources, logs of mineral evaluation boreholes and observations of nearby exposures in the quarry to the west of the Application Area.

6.1.8 Within the Application Area Boulder Clay is predominantly confined to land situated at the highest elevations, to the south of the Spanhoe Fault. The clay thickens to the east-south-east locally, due to a combination of the south-easterly downthrowing of faults, regional dip and topography.

6.1.9 The thickness of overburden (consisting of soils overlying Boulder Clay) varies greatly within the Application Area. Overburden ranges from 0 to 2.5 metres in the surrendered area to the north from 0 to 4.3 metres in the yellow area, and from around 1 metre in the west to around 11.5 metres in the east of the green area. The limestone varies in thickness from an average of 8.3 metres

in thickness in the existing consent area to an average of 11.4 metres in thickness in the proposed extension area.

6.1.10 The boreholes taken during evaluation of the site in 2000 are attached in Appendix 2.

6.2 Reserves

6.2.1 As a result of the geological work undertaken the suggested workable reserves of limestone are estimated at 11.25 million tonnes. At the anticipated levels of production from the site this provides a useful life of some 45 years, dependant upon fluctuations in annual output which will vary according to market conditions.

7 OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

7.1 Method and Sequence of Mineral Extraction

7.1.1 The sequence of proposed working involves the progressive removal of limestone within both the existing consented area and the proposed extension area. The mineral being extracted in a “dry state” and the general phasing of development is shown on the detailed phasing plans, Plan No’s 3 to 7.

7.1.2 It is proposed that the limestone will be removed down to the proposed limits of working, generally lying above the local water table, by a hydraulic excavator and delivered to the receiving hopper within the proposed semi-mobile mineral processing plant.

7.1.3 The proposed working depth is between approximately 5 to 20 metres and the working area is divided into five general phases of working. Working will commence at the southern end of the proposed quarry area (Phase 1) initially in a southerly direction, then change and move in a westerly direction through Phase 2. Working will then turn in a northerly direction into Phase 3 and then turn north-east moving through Phases 4 and 5. Soils and overburden stripped from the working area will be used to form peripheral screening bunds to reduce the impact of the workings upon residential properties within Wakerley and it’s immediate surrounds.

7.1.4 Suitable margins of support will be left at the perimeters of the excavations to ensure support to adjoining unworked land and to protect retained peripheral boundary features, hedgerows and fencing.

7.2 Processing Plant

7.2.1 Prior to the marketing of the limestone from the site it will be necessary to process the raw material via the proposed mobile processing plant and ancillary services.

7.2.2 The method of plant operation will involve transportation of the “as dug” limestone by excavator/loading shovel to the receiving hopper of the processing plant which will ensure that material is fed to the processing section at an even rate. The stone will then pass via crushing equipment and over screens to produce classified grades of stone for general construction uses.

7.2.3 The mobile plant used at the site is anticipated to comprise:

An Excavator for removal of material from the working face

A Loading shovel for mineral handling purposes

7.2.4 The mobile processing plant is anticipated to comprise:

A Primary Mobile Crusher

A Secondary Impactor

Several Screener Units

7.2.5 It is anticipated that the finished products will removed from the processing plant by loading shovel to nearby storage areas. As required, the stone products will then be rehandled by loading shovel on to road haulage vehicles which will be checked over a certified weighbridge within the site. Following issue of the necessary delivery and accounting documents, the products will be transported out to the customer.

7.3 Office Accommodation and Weighbridge Facilities.

7.3.1 In association with the limestone quarrying operations it is essential to provide comprehensive administration facilities and controls. These are expected to comprise a managers office, quarry weighbridge, fitters workshop and welfare facilities. The quarry weighbridge and associated control cabin are likely to be situated close to the site entrance within the northern sector of Phase 1. As working proceeds into Phase 4 and 5 these facilities may be relocated to the northern end of the site to optimise site security and reduce the haulage distances for vehicles leaving the site.

7.3.2 All operational areas of the site will be secured by suitable fencing to maintain public safety and site security.

7.4 Access and Traffic Movements.

7.4.1 As indicated on the development plans the site will be provided with a well designed site access roadway which will be linked via the local road network to the A43 Road. This route has been carefully designed following discussions with the local liaison group to avoid quarry traffic travelling through the nearby villages of Wakerley, Harringworth, Laxton and Barrowden. The access, and internal site roadways, will be provided with a hard surface which will be regularly cleaned in order to ensure that soil and stone are not carried onto local roadways.

7.4.2 Dependant upon market conditions, it is considered that a standard level of output for this kind of quarry will be approximately 250,000 tonnes per annum. This level of output is considered to be appropriate for the duration of operations within the proposed development area. Accordingly, vehicle movements will be around 50 movements into and out of the site each day. A total of 100 movements or approximately 8 per hour.

7.4.3 Apart from the occasional delivery of aggregate to customers within the local villages all traffic will leave the quarry area and proceed via the internal access road to the A43, departing via the primary road network to the customer. Having regard to the direct access onto an established primary route for heavy goods vehicles it is considered that the distribution of traffic from the site will not be problematic.

7.5 Hours Of Working.

7.5.1 It is proposed that production operations be carried out at the site during the following hours:

Monday to Friday	07.00 to 19.00 hours.
Saturday	07.00 to 14.00 hours.

7.5.2 Outside these hours work would be restricted to plant maintenance and for essential safety work.

7.6 Employment.

7.6.1 The development is expected to employ some 6 persons at the site during the majority of the year with possible additional personnel in the summer.

7.6.2 In addition to direct employment the proposals will also create a demand for road haulage to deliver products and in this respect it is suggested that some 20 drivers will be employed on a regular daily basis depending upon site output. The operation will give rise to further employment in the use of local services to supply the needs of the quarry and administration facilities together with occasional contracts for hired in plant and equipment. The contribution to the local economy will typically involve the purchase of local goods and services such as:

Site staff and employees	Road haulage
Fuel and oil purchase	Plant and vehicle hire
Plant repairs and spares	Building contractors
Landscape contractors	Tree and shrub purchase
Office supplies and equipment	Canteen supplies

7.6.3 The proposal will therefore provide local employment.

7.7 Restoration

7.7.1 The proposed restoration of the working area is illustrated on Plan No. 8 and has been designed to ensure continuity of extraction and restoration. The final restored landform has been designed to accord with good landscape practice and takes account of local landscape strategies. The intention of the restoration scheme is to produce a landform which is sympathetic to the surrounding topography and which supports a return of a major part of the site to agriculture. The remainder of the site will be restored to conservation uses including calcareous grassland, herb-rich grassland and tree and shrub planting areas to provide habitat diversity.

7.7.2 The overall restoration scheme will be achieved by the creation of a restoration platform by spreading on-site quarry waste to agreed levels. Once these levels have been achieved the stored soils will be replaced and the proposed agriculture and grassland cultivated to form a seed-bed. The new

hedgerow planting and woodland blocks will break up the regular appearance of the restored landform and have been designed to afford minimal disruption to farming practice. As previously indicated the resultant restored landform will be the result of a comprehensive landscape strategy and compliance with current good practice and a detailed management scheme.

7.7.3 Due to the length of time over which quarry operations will be undertaken a regular dialogue will be maintained with the Mineral Planning Authority, Natural England and the local Wildlife Trust concerning the details of site restoration for specific phases of the development. In this way variations in the depth of working due to the site geology can be adapted to suit the overall restoration scheme. This scheme will also allow the incorporation of specific features such as retained areas of quarry face to permit geological study.

7.7.4 The final landform has been designed to create a terrain which may be some 10 to 15 metres lower than original ground levels but which blends with the undisturbed lands and achieves acceptable gradients to disperse rainfall and hence surface water.

7.8 Landscaping.

7.8.1 The final objective of the proposed development will be to achieve a positive and beneficial afteruse and to continue to reduce the visual impact of the proposed workings wherever possible.

7.8.2 A visual appraisal is provided in the Environmental Statement which accompanies the planning application. In conjunction with the quarry development a scheme of boundary screening and planting will be agreed with the Mineral Planning Authority. This will supplement visual screening afforded by the existing woodland planting around the proposed development area and storage of soils on the periphery of the extraction areas.

7.8.3 As described above the restored working areas within the proposed development will be at a lower level to that which exists at present and will give a visual diversity and interest when viewed from around the site.

7.8.4 The afteruses of the site will be carefully conceived to return land to agriculture and at the same time enhance the local conservation value of the site. The overall scheme produced will combine the results of various appraisals undertaken prior to, or during, the development of the site. A number of landscape initiatives will be introduced to establish opportunities for nature conservation and enhancement. This will include the development of new woodland and shrub planting with new hedgerows within the site in order to provide corridors for wildlife and increase habitat diversity.

7.8.5 Consideration will also be given to enhancement of the local geological resource by retaining sections of the quarry face for supervised study.

7.9 Aftercare.

7.9.1 Upon the completion of each restoration phase a programme of aftercare will be implemented for a minimum of 5 years. Each phase will be managed to obtain the final restoration objective either for nature conservation or agriculture. A scheme of aftercare will be agreed with the local planning authority, and other interested specialist bodies, and will include such items as:

- additional site drainage
- special rates and cover for fertilizer treatment
- maintenance of grassed areas
- cropping programmes and stocking rates
- weed control and fertiliser applications to new woodland
- general maintenance of trees and shrubs
- activity to encourage flora and fauna

8 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 General

8.1.1 The details of environmental matters are considered in detailed specialist sections within the accompanying Environmental Statement. However, brief comments in respect of such matters in the context of the planning proposals are outlined below.

8.2 Noise and Vibration

8.2.1 The principal sources of noise at the site will be the running of the limestone processing facilities and the use of mobile plant during stripping, excavation and restoration operations.

8.2.2 A noise survey has been undertaken and the results are shown in Appendix F of the Environmental Assessment. The processing plant and associated administration buildings will be sited at a low elevation, some 10 metres below surrounding ground levels, and at least 500 metres from the nearest property.

8.2.3 The primary noise generated by the extractive operations will be created by the excavator and loading shovels utilised during the loading and transportation of “raw” limestone to the processing plant. This operation, which is intermittent in nature, will be carried out during normal working hours and in accordance with the requirements of the County Council as recommended by current guidance (Annex 2 of MPS2 refers). In this respect, the site operators will ensure that all mobile and fixed plant, equipment, machinery and vehicles shall be effectively silenced and maintained at all times.

8.2.4 The assessment carried out shows that noise from activities associated with the quarry activities would be within acceptable noise limits and apart from good practice in the maintenance of plant and machinery, the maintenance of peripheral screening mounds and the upkeep of site haulage roads no specific noise mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

8.3 Dust

8.3.1 The principal potential sources of airborne dust at similar quarry operations have been identified as the handling of soils, mineral extraction, loading and tipping, site haulage, the processing of minerals, road transport and wind blow across soils storage areas and material stockpiles.

8.3.2 An air quality assessment has been undertaken and the results are shown in Appendix G of the Environmental Assessment.

8.3.3 Effective site management will ensure that dust emissions can be controlled at the site and the measures to be used for such control are outlined in detail in the air quality assessment.

8.4 Conservation Status

8.4.1 An ecological survey has been undertaken and the results are shown in Appendix H of the Environmental Assessment. The application site is currently in active agricultural use and other than very small areas of wildlife verge no exceptional vegetation or fauna has established within the application site. Accordingly, apart from maintenance of peripheral hedgerows or planting compartments no particular protection measures are thought necessary during the working of the site. The proposals do not envisage the removal of mature vegetation and as such will not involve the loss of habitat for significant fauna species. Indeed there are no designated areas of ecological importance within the site.

8.4.2 The restoration of the site has been designed to significantly enhance the nature conservation interest in the locality and will include the creation of new broadleaved woodland, the creation of new unimproved species-rich grassland, the creation of conservation headlands, the creation of small open water pools, the creation of low soft cliffs and the creation of new hedgerows.

8.5 Archaeology

8.5.1 Significant desk top and field archaeological studies have been undertaken for the application site and are presented in Appendix I of the Environmental Assessment. In summary, there are a number of archaeological finds located within the proposed development site, of varying age, but given an agreed methodology for evaluation and record during the extraction programme no adverse implications will arise through the working of the site.

8.5.2 The applicants are fully committed to ensuring that the impact on archaeology is minimised throughout the working of the site. Impact on the remains will be monitored and minimised through preservation by record. The proposed development provides an opportunity to contribute to the localised knowledge of archaeology in the Wakerley area and it is considered that the development will not give rise to a significant impact on archaeology or cultural heritage.

8.6 Hydrological Impact

8.6.1 A hydrological study has been undertaken in association with the preparation of the planning application and this is presented as Appendix C of the Environmental Statement. The proposed quarry operations have generally been designed above the level of the localised water table and this will not be adversely affected by the quarry development. Accordingly, apart from the need to drain accumulations of surface water, the quarry will be worked in a completely dry manner, Furthermore, no water courses are present within the site. Accordingly, given suitable measures to collect and disperse surface water within the existing and proposed excavations the extraction of limestone will not give rise to concerns as to the protection or quality of ground water resources.

8.6.2 The application is also accompanied by a detailed flood risk assessment which is presented as Appendix D. This concludes that there will be no adverse impact upon the locality as a result of the changes in local landform as a result of the proposed quarry development.

9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Summary

9.1.1 Wakerley Quarry has an important role to play in the future provision of limestone for general construction uses and agricultural lime within the County of Northamptonshire and the South Midlands Region. It further is anticipated to play a significant role in the general economic prosperity of the locality by way of employment opportunities for local people and the use of local businesses to supply the day to day needs of the quarry and associated premises.

9.1.2 As described, the application comprises a comprehensive package of measures aimed principally at mitigating the impact of the proposed quarry operations upon the local environment and community.

9.1.3 The applicants have carefully examined the scope of the development and recognise that activities at the site should be undertaken in full accordance with current environmental and planning controls and are fully committed to the success of the operations proposed. All works at the site will be the subject of constant and regular monitoring by specialist Consultants or applicant personnel to ensure the effective implementation of the scheme.

9.1.4 The applicants further confirm that the development will be undertaken in full accordance with the approved, or emerging, planning policies of the County Council and the terms of any renewal of planning permission which may be issued regulating activities at the site.

9.2 Conclusions

9.2.1 The overall quarry development can be carried out with limited effect upon the local landscape, or property.

9.2.2 As described in this submission:

- There is no adverse impact upon landscape and visual amenity resulting from the development proposals.
- There are no adverse impacts to areas of ecological or geological interest lying within or adjacent to the site.
- There are no perceived implications to historic buildings or archaeology arising from the proposed development.
- There are no adverse hydrological implications arising from the proposed development.
- There are no adverse flood risk implications arising from the proposed development.

- There are no adverse noise implications arising from the proposed development.

- There are no adverse air quality implications arising from the proposed development.

- There will be no increase in traffic upon the local villages generated by the quarry working. A new purpose built quarry haulage road will be constructed linking the proposed quarry development to the existing road network serving the site. Thereby giving an environmentally acceptable distribution of lorry traffic associated with the development.

- The proposed final landform will be developed to blend sympathetically with the surrounding landscape and the proposed restoration scheme will improve or even enhance the biodiversity of the area with an increased variety of habitats.

9.2.3 The details contained within this application confirm that there are no significant environmental limitations to the proposals. It is therefore hoped that this submission will receive the support of the Officers and Members of Northamptonshire County Council enabling the quarry development to be commenced at the earliest possible opportunity.