

Mineral Resource Assessment

Site at: 23 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 9NJ

Planning Application for a new dwelling (Mid Sussex District Council reference DM/25/1657)

Introduction

This Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA) report has been prepared for Mr & Mrs Baker in respect of their Planning Application for a new dwelling to replace an existing garage within the curtilage of No.23 Hurst Road.

It is understood that the Application Site falls within a 'Minerals Consultation Area'.

Planning Policy

Policy M9 of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018), states as follows:

Policy M9: Safeguarding Minerals

(a) Existing minerals extraction sites³³ will be safeguarded against non-mineral development that prejudices their ability to supply minerals in the manner associated with the permitted activities.

(b) Soft sand (including potential silica sand), sharp sand and gravel, brick-making clay, building stone resources and chalk reserves³⁴ are safeguarded against sterilisation. Proposals for non-mineral development within the Minerals

Safeguarded Areas (as shown on maps in Appendix E) will not be permitted unless:

- (i) Mineral sterilisation will not occur; or**
- (ii) it is appropriate and practicable to extract the mineral prior to the development taking place, having regards to the other policies in this Plan; or**
- (iii) the overriding need for the development outweighs the safeguarding of the mineral and it has been demonstrated that prior extraction is not practicable or environmentally feasible.**

In addition, WSCC have published supporting documentation that is also relevant in the form of the 'Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Guidance' (March 2020), which provides guidance on how the safeguarding of minerals resources and infrastructure

associated with minerals supply and waste management will take place in West Sussex (for example, wharves, railheads, processing plants). It explains how the safeguarding policies in the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan and the West Sussex Waste Local Plan 2014 will be implemented in practice.

With respect to Policy M9 it says “Sand (sharp, soft, and silica) and gravel, brick-making clay, building stone (sandstone), and chalk are regarded as economically important minerals in West Sussex. Therefore, it is important that they are protected from sterilisation by surface development. The extent of the resources of these minerals that are to be safeguarded is shown as Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSA) on the policies maps in the JMLP. Defining MSAs does not mean that there is a presumption that minerals will be worked. It indicates where Policy M9 will apply and is a tool to protect the resource from potential sterilisation from non-mineral development... The approach to safeguarding each mineral type differs (see paragraph 2.1 below) and is explained in the supporting text to Policy M9 (Safeguarding Minerals) of the JMLP. Safeguarding covers existing and proposed minerals extraction sites, as well as identified unexploited mineral resources. Local Planning Authorities (LPA) should show the MSAs on their local plan policy maps. To ensure effective consultation with the MPA, and to ensure safeguarded mineral resource areas are protected from non-mineral development, Minerals Consultation Areas (MCA) have been defined based upon the safeguarded areas. As well as areas of mineral resource, any new minerals sites that are granted planning permission will be safeguarded by Policy M9 of the JMLP. A list of existing sites that are safeguarded will be maintained and published in the WSCC Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) each year. The AMR contains the latest list of safeguarded sites and can be viewed in the Minerals and Waste Policy section of the County Council’s website.”

Assessment

The Applicants have previously had a soil investigation carried out by Southern Testing. This confirmed the make-up of the site comprised mainly a mixture of sand and clay down to a depth of 2.9 metres.

The Application site comprises part of the domestic curtilage of No.23 Hurst Road, a detached dwelling constructed in around 1930, which is set within mature and landscaped gardens. The new house is to be constructed broadly in the location of an existing garage, which is to be demolished to facilitate the proposed development of a self-build dwelling.

It is understood that historically, to the rear of the Application Site, there was a commercial sandpit, but this use ceased during the 1950’s. Around that time the garden for No.23 was increased in size to the rear.

Importantly the Site area is modest, and has comprised domestic garden for circa 70 years. It cannot be considered to offer any notable resource availability given this limited site area, and its relationship with neighbouring properties. The resource does

not present an opportunity to support anywhere near the annual county demands for sand, and additionally, development of this area does not present potential to render the resource sterile outside of the development boundary.

In terms of the quality of the resource remaining within the Application Site boundary, this is unknown. However, the “West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan Assessment of Need for Aggregates: Local Aggregate Assessment 2018” states that:

“Much of the soft sand outside the SDNP (South Downs National Park) in West Sussex has been worked or is currently being worked. The majority of the remaining land-won soft sand resources lie within the SDNP. Stakeholder engagement carried out in 2008/09 provided some information about the quality of sand and gravel resources outside the National Park. One operator advised that after some limited investigation (drilling boreholes etc.) of unconsolidated sand deposits, anything east of Steyning was found to be finer and ‘dirtier’ deposits which may make extraction uneconomic on any significant scale. There has also been no significant interest in any areas outside of the SDNP, including through the “Call for sites” processes in 2014, and more recently, for the soft sand review, during 2018.”

Consequently, it can be concluded that the quality of the on-Site resource is most likely of a lower quality than that obtained from those sources located within the South Downs National Park to the west of Steyning. This would, therefore, reduce the economic viability of on-Site extraction further.

The extraction of sand would require planning permission and environmental permitting to operate and backfill the Site. The high cost associated with purchasing the Site (given its existing residential use value), together with processing, mobile plant operation and material transport is cumulatively considered to render extraction commercially of mineral resource from this Site completely unviable, particularly in view of the anticipated low quality of the resource and the limited volume of resource that is likely present. Our assessment of the economic importance for this resource is, therefore, considered to be low.

18th July 2025