

I oppose this quarry on a number of grounds:

- The inappropriate location
- The damage and risk to the environment, particularly the bromate pollution effect on already pressurised water supplies.
- A firm belief that those charged with enforcing the many conditions of this application are unwilling or unable to enforce them.
- The precedent that will be set if the abuse of the planning system by the landowner is allowed to reap financial reward
- The complete and utter failure by local government that has allowed and in part facilitated such abuse together with the furtherance of the disconnect and loss of trust between the populace and those that are privileged to govern that threatens the very fabric of society.

Taking these grounds in turn:

Location

The proposed site is on green belt land - the development of a multi generational primary industrial site is not appropriate, the huge lengths of high bund, the stored piles of aggregate, the processing plant higher than all surrounding vegetation and site facilities, offices, canteens, weigh bridges and wheel washers cannot in any way be characterised as open countryside and the extended duration makes this development anything but temporary, three planning application refusals and a previous appeal have established this fact beyond doubt.

While on the subject, the appellant's council took great delight in embarrassing our ill prepared MP and leading him to make the flawed admission that gravel can only be won from greenbelt areas.

While I agree that aggregates may only be won from where they lie, I would suggest to him that back at the beginning of the century, before discovery of the bromate pollution, aggregate could have been extracted from the eastern half of the ex-BAe site before redevelopment, so no, not all aggregate has to be sourced from greenbelt.

The appellant's minor tinkering with their application by removing the concrete batching plant has made no material change to the impact on the greenbelt and its surrounding area and therefore the repeated applications and appeals can only be viewed as vexatious attempts to wear down opposition resolve and financial reserves in order to bypass the democratic system.

The site is bounded on three sides by residential areas in close proximity and Popefield Farm actually within the envelope of the proposed quarry.

It will blight the lives of those living in the area, in many cases for the rest of their lives, Indeed as previously mentioned it will not return to anything approaching its current state of maturity for 3 or 4 generations.

It will cause a lessening of the quality of life and for many will be responsible for a decline in mental and physical health, so shortening lifespan through the effects of noise, dust, pollution and inevitable extension of one of the largest groundwater contamination incidents in Europe that now threatens the water supply of North West London in addition to the substantial areas of Hertfordshire already poisoned.

While fellow residents have provided detailed technical comments on specific issues of noise and dust I would like to remake and extend the following points:

Noise - the appellants, as is to be expected, seek to play down the impact of their activities. They do this by taking measurements in inappropriate locations at restricted times and then present them as the status quo.

Further they mischaracterise the nature of the sound energy emitted by their activities.

By sticking their instruments under the wheels of rush hour traffic at the busiest junctions and road hazards they would seek to present the entire district as experiencing extreme sound levels whereupon they contend that their additional noise would be drowned in the so called ambient.

This is a thorough and disingenuous misrepresentation of the true situation as experienced by residents - the appellants have made no assessment of sound levels in and around the main residential areas, on and within Ellenbrook residential property that is mainly set back from the A1057 carriageway or the area of Salisbury Village

In these areas, outside of peak travel times, the sound levels can regularly be characterised as 'rural quiet'.

Under these conditions the sound levels emanating from quarry activity will be both substantial and intrusive, likely exceeding background levels far beyond the 10dB limit.

Further to the misrepresentative location of measurements, the presented sound level monitoring relies almost entirely on frequency response of the instrumentation with its ubiquitous but misplaced A weighting profile, but also both time and peak averaging to achieve the appellants desired result.

This multiple averaging and weighting completely obscures the fact that the most intrusive sounds are many hundreds if not thousands of times more powerful than the ambient levels and that the ear is far more discerning of these peak events than a general background.

The same being true of all our senses.

Much of the sound generated will be at the ends of the audible spectrum - the bass roar of a large diesel engine being gunned to pull away a heavy load, the subsequent high pitched whine of the turbocharger spooling up the rev range as the engine accelerates, the boom of an empty truck hitting ruts in haul roads, the penetrating high pitch reversing sounders, these sounds will not be isolated incidents they will be the norm of operation interrupting hundreds of times an hour.

The use of A weighting on sound measurements, while it attempts to simulate the sensitivity of the human ear, is not suitable for transient peak sounds as it only maps the ears response to constant level pure sine wave tones.

The low frequency sounds that are attenuated from the measurements by the A weighting filters that roll off frequency at something just over 3dB per octave are particularly problematic and the use of A weighting though widespread and entrenched in regulatory circles is thoroughly discredited within the academic and audio community where there are no external agendas.

The following comments or equivalent sentiments from sound professionals are readily found with just basic research into the subject:

To obtain any correlation with reality, a noise measured using A-weighting must be ...

No greater than 40-50dB unweighted

Free from impulse, tonality or rhythm

Wide bandwidth - preferably random ... or ...

A single frequency without appreciable harmonics

I would contend that the plant and equipment proposed meets none of these basic requirements for valid use of A weighting curves during measurement, it seems that the previous inspector agreed:

I quote from the decision notice paragraph 65:

In particular, the use of large diesel vehicles emitting low frequency noise and/or tracked vehicles such as bulldozers with distinctive noise characteristics, would at times result in intrusive noise not likely to be properly captured by the LAeq,1hr indices proposed in the suggested noise conditions and advised in the PPG.

The comment demonstrates his recognition through common sense, real world experience and/or learned knowledge that industry standard measurement methods do not truly represent human perception.

So to summarise, the figures manufactured by the appellant 's 'models' are readily shown to be completely divorced from reality and that even if, for sake of argument, one accepts their dubious figures, they are not compliant with limits within the ECP or at Popefield Farm.

While the peak sounds are intrusive in a conscious and irritating manner this does not mean that the increased level of background noise has no effect.

The continuous drone that will emanate from the site may be able to be tuned out of conscious response but its effects are far more insidious and impact on mental health which ultimately leads to physical effects.

The Appellants sound assessment completely fails to take account of equipment such as generators and pump sets that will certainly be required to run 24/7 for extended periods to control groundwater ingress, rainfall, recharge of plant/washer lagoons and will be additional to the 11h 5.5 day weeks of the heavier plant

I would invite the inspector to consider the scenario where a house party near his residence is playing music that is not to his taste i.e. noise, the party is somewhat distant and the perceived volume is not actually excessive ie. under 10dB increase but is certainly audible when listened for - now imagine that house party lasts for the next forty years!

Airborne and other contaminants

The appellants seem to be relying hugely on software models imported from other nations, climates and dissimilar operations.

On the basis of these overextended extrapolations they are casually dismissive of any element of risk to surrounding inhabitants and it would seem, to their own employees

They seem unaware or uncaring of the widespread increase in both scientific and societal understanding of the hazard and risks presented by poor air quality with particular reference to the PM2.5 particulates.

Are the appellants blind to the direction of travel in society? ULEZ, class actions against diesel vehicle manufacturers and so forth? Barley a day goes by without some story in the media on this subject, is it credible that so many people are wrong?

One would have thought self interest would lead them to take this matter seriously if nothing else.

With regard to the imported spoil, it has already been pointed out that the appellant and their advisors have made no consideration of its content and potential to cause harm.

It is blatantly apparent that the air quality advisor has never been on a demolition or building site when he made his assertion that all imported spoil would arrive in a homogenised mass of controlled moisture levels - I almost fell off my chair laughing - the assertion was so obviously made up on the spot.

The only applied moisture he will find in a typical building site grab load is cold coffee and urine. More likely is a thoroughgoing mixture of soil, aggregate and concrete contaminated with gypsum, wood, domestic and bodily waste as a matter of course and in frequent cases the loads will contain concealed tyres, fridges and asbestos containing materials amongst other hazardous wastes.

There is no detail on how these materials will be screened for or what will be done about them as they are seen tumbling down the side of an excavation into a flooded pit.

I suspect they will be ignored and add to the pollutant cocktail in our groundwater.

This cavalier attitude to a major public health issue must surely reflect on their underlying attitude to all the other issues that plague this site and by itself be justification to refuse planning consent

The one area that seems to have been well thought out and provided with a robust solution is the aspect of surface water.

Probably because it has been developed by an engineer using known measured real world data unlike the software based guessing exercise from the air quality representatives, the same sort of desk based assessment that deemed the flammable cladding of Grenfell Tower to be safe!

Other areas that are of major concern to us:

Traffic management;

Evidence and calculation shows a substantial mismatch between outbound and inbound materials movements, the result being a serious six figure shortfall in the proposed number of lorry movements required to remediate the quarry site.

The appellant's traffic specialist talked at length about the incorrect section of the A1057, a mistake with the name or has he been assessing the wrong location?

Having had this error pointed out to him he then proceeded to assure the enquiry that there were no issues with road capacity for southbound movements onto the A1M at J3, a junction that has no southbound entry slip.

It then had to be explained to him how trucks would have to travel alongside the A1M on the A1001, locally known as Roehyde Way to J2 to access a southbound entry slip. He was obviously completely unfamiliar with the local road layout, route designations and adjacent road users, yet he still maintained his assessment of no traffic issues.

He made no mention of J4 for northbound traffic, the most likely route to be followed by sat nav equipment.

Yet another desk jockey that has made his assessment from maps and statistics.

The addition of hundreds of heavy lorries a day will accelerate the wear on road surfaces that are already in pitiful state of repair - drainage gulleys brimful with years of accumulated sediment, gutters that resemble banked flowerbeds are in ready evidence on the A1057 (and most other roads)

The smallest amount of rain causes flooding at the junction of Albatross way and A1057 that has been present for in excess of 15 years, further flooding opposite the turning into Selwyn Drive and in the area of Wilkins Green Lane /Popefield Farm are persistent problems.

HCC provides minimal maintenance and no doubt the S106 appropriations levied on the appellant will disappear into the general pot with no improvements made.

The very real issue of queuing lorries for both the turn in to site and early morning slots was dismissed with no explanation of how this self-evident issue was to be addressed.

With the imposition of the ULEZ in London the home counties have been the recipient of transfer of many older vehicles, particularly in commercial fleets, where operators moved older

polluting vehicles out of London to the Home counties, these are the vehicles that will be passing our residences hundreds of times a day emitting their higher rates of pollutants and particulates.

There is no consideration given to this increase in diesel vehicle pollution and as has already been raised such monitoring as is carried out in the area already shows such pollutants to exceed air quality limits. The appellant's response is to deny that their activity would have any contribution to the problem.

Groundwater Pollution

The site is located on the fringes of a major groundwater pollution incident that is the cause of the public water supply being contaminated with bromide and highly carcinogenic bromate. The pollution incident has been ongoing for decades and has already caused a significant reduction in availability of water sources for public supply. Water utilities have been forced to augment inadequate local supplies from places as far afield as Grafham Water in the Anglian area, a source that is itself under pressure and frequent stoppages from farm related run off pollution resulting in algal blooms.

Other water supplies in this area with lower level contamination are in continuing use with the contaminate being diluted to bring contaminant levels within regulatory limits.

Water supplies in the east of the county are being shielded by abstraction of contaminated water at the Bishops Rise wells in Hatfield, this process seems to be run more on luck than judgement or understanding.

Despite some decades of monitoring the pollution spread there is still no clear understanding of the plume behaviour with many conflicting expert opinions as heard here yesterday.

It is my understanding that rising pollution levels in East Hertfordshire are giving grave cause for concern for the security of supply from the Lea Valley into London.

There appears to have been no attempt whatsoever to isolate the source of the pollution despite its well known location.

The appellant would have us believe that despite the plume encompassing many hundreds of square kilometres the separation of mere tens of metres from contaminated monitoring points precludes contamination on the proposed quarry site.

The main thrust of their assertion revolves around failure to detect bromate on site, a failure that is largely based around their refusal to directly monitor for it.

It is proven that throughout the site, levels of bromide in excess of 125ug/L are present. This being the designated level of contamination deemed to indicate presence of the pollution plume. While bromide is found in nature and from seawater and gritting it is not credible to suggest that bromide is present at these levels from any other source than the plume and as bromide is a co-contaminant it is entirely reasonable to extrapolate to rising levels of bromate on the quarry site.

The appellant has failed to continue publishing monitoring for the last three years presumably because they expect to, or already have unfavourable results.

We note that the University sports facilities immediately adjacent to the proposed site have ceased use of their borehole based irrigation system and now supply it from townswater.

The appellant has maintained an intransigent attitude to the dangers presented by the bromate contamination and has had to be incrementally forced by external agencies to take any measures designed to mitigate the risks.

The Environment Agency that has presided over this catastrophic pollution engenders very little confidence, it seems that their understanding of the risks associated with excavations on this site has been informed by public protest, outside expert comment, outside monitoring and very little of their own assessment.

They have adopted a number of contradictory positions over the duration of the succession of planning applications with individual representatives at some planning hearings making quite ludicrously incorrect statements.

It is quite distressing and frightening to see the level of trust placed in this organisation by our elected representatives when they made assertions such as there being no risk involved in dewatering the LMH for excavation.

I have personal professional experience as a chemical engineer and also as a member of the public reporting incidents to the EA where the response was institutionally incompetent and where individuals had no understanding of their own data or procedures.

On the basis of the EA's current performance in containing and remediating the plume I have no confidence that they are able to police and enforce the conditions that they might impose.

On examination of their latest set of conditions they all appear to be requests for information after the fact, with the partial exception of condition six none of the 'conditions' have any measurable or time bound objectives.

The one bromate related recommendation proposed by the HCC hydrologist and others subsequently accepted as a statement of common ground was that the LMH was not to be dewatered in order to prevent drawdown. This critical condition - obvious to anyone who has dug holes on the beach as a child, never appeared to occur to them independently.

There is no doubt in my mind that should planning consent be granted that the appellant would proceed exactly as suited their purposes, paying lip service to, and running roughshod over, an EA that is under-resourced, under-powered with a long and numerous history of failure to prevent industrial and utility companies from abusing the environment.

I also have no doubt that if the site were to become significantly contaminated the appellant would via the medium of a subsidiary operator become insolvent and leave the resulting mess for the public purse to deal.

My cynical view also applies to any conditions that might be managed by our local government functions as they too have shown themselves to be untrustworthy and unable to enforce basic planning agreements.

Arlington/Goodman S106

Part of the planning consent for the redevelopment of the ex BAe site was enshrined in the section 106 agreement. A significant element of that agreement was that the western part of the site now known as Ellenbrook Fields should pass into public use as a 'Country Park' included in this agreement was the establishment of a trust to oversee setup and management of the ECP and to provide initial funding for the trust.

The landowner has now fully developed the eastern site with a mixture of residential and commercial property but has for 25 years refused to honour the setup and financing of the park or its managing trust.

A mixture of threats and intimidation has been used to stop the local authority from enforcing the agreement and now they have capitulated into renegotiating said agreement.

To provide planning consent to the appellant provides direct reward to the landowner who will then be able to complete a lucrative lease agreement with the appellant setting an alarming precedent that refusal to comply with S106 agreements is both tolerated and financially rewarding.

WHBC has never disabused Arlington of this or provided a satisfactory explanation of this situation.

This quarry proposal has been turned down 4 times in due process under the democratic governance of the UK. Many of us are finding it difficult to understand why we are once again facing the possibility of having our legitimate local decisions overturned by the central government.

There is extreme anger in the community over the decision from HCC to abandon the representation of their constituents and their cowardly about turn forced by unelected officers. Not only the failure to appear here to defend the decision but a traitorous reversal of position throwing both the HCC councillors and residents under the bus.

The inspector must not take lightly the level of public despair and fury that is building and should make it clear when he makes his report to the Secretary of State.

Governance in this nation is by consent, much of this century has been marred by the increasing disenfranchisement of the electorate with the behaviour of our government which is demonstrated by increasing lack of respect for 'authority'. People are losing trust and after the unprecedented events related to Covid and the subsequent criminal behaviour of Boris Johnson, his associates, the selfish greed of Liz Truss and her cohorts the inevitable decision of the electorate was to look for an alternative.

The new Labour administration has but one short chance to convince the electorate that they are trustworthy if we are to be led to understand otherwise that consent may experience wider withdrawal than that already demonstrated in recent months.

We have heard from others and I would repeat that many of society do not worship at the holy altar of continuous economic growth and ever increasing destructive consumerism that appears to drive the 'need' for such proposals as are being considered by this enquiry.

I make no apology for taking this discussion into the political and philosophical arena, that was the decision of the SoS and she should be aware of public feeling.

Please make it clear to the SoS that overruling local populace for the benefit of foreign, big business is not the way to communicate trust with their electorate.

I implore you to recommend in your report that this appeal must be denied and that the site should be immediately excluded from mineral resource plans ensuring no further applications.

Thank you for your attention.

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