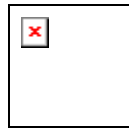


**FIELD 961, ST. MARY (PART OF): REZONING FOR AN INTERIM EXTENSION OF LA GIGOULANDE  
QUARRY**

---

**Lodged au Greffe on 6th July 1999  
by the Planning and Environment Committee**

---



**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

175

1999

P.95

Price code: C

## **PROPOSITION**

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -**

to re-zone an area of land measuring approximately 1.4 vergées, shown hatched on Drawing No. 617/1 from the Sensitive Landscape Area of the Agricultural Priority Zone to land for stone quarrying as an extension of the Approved Quarry Site.

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

## **REPORT**

### **Introduction**

In December 1998, the Planning and Environment Committee received an approach from Granite Products (C.I.) Ltd., seeking support for an interim proposal to extend its existing 130 metre-wide quarry-face back into Field 961 by 20m. (see hatched area on Drawing No. 617/1). The extension was proposed in order that La Gigoulande quarry could continue operating and supplying the Island's building industry for a period of approximately 12 months at the normal rate of extraction, pending -

- (i) the final approval of a Jersey Mineral Strategy; and
- (ii) the determination of an outstanding planning application to extend the quarry into three adjacent fields.

Field 961 is currently in agricultural use and is located in the "Sensitive Landscape Area of the Agricultural Priority Zone", where there is a normal presumption against new development, except where it is essential for agricultural purposes.

However, following discussions with representatives of the company, the Planning and Environment Committee broadly accepted the necessity of this modest proposal and was minded to support it, subject to detailed and technical clearance. The Committee subsequently requested that a formal application be made, with supportive information explaining the intentions behind the proposal.

A formal planning application for development permission was duly made in March 1999. In an accompanying submission, the Company points out that, in addition to providing for continued operation, the proposals will enable good quarrying practice to be maintained. It points out that -

*“.....through lack of space remaining, the normal working face, comprising four ‘benches’ has been reduced to two actual ‘benches’, which provide a much steeper profile against which to create an internal haul road.*

*Approval to the 20m extension would restore the ability to adopt best quarrying practice and work normally from four ‘benches’ and hence the ability to operate the internal haul route serving those faces and any future extension, at a sensible workable gradient.”*

The existing and proposed working benches at the site boundary are shown on Drawing No. 618/1.

## **Background**

Rock aggregates are vital natural resources, which make a major contribution to the economy of the Island and the quality of Jersey life. The construction industry depends on a readily available supply of these aggregates, for the development of schools, homes and other essential community facilities.

Granite Products Ltd. is one of two main rock quarrying operators in the Island supplying aggregates for the construction industry. It is part of Robert Brett and Sons, a family-run United Kingdom group of companies, and has been operating from St. Peter's Valley since 1946.

The company is based at La Gigoulande Quarry, which is more commonly known as St. Peter's Quarry, and employs 50 staff. The quarry is the only current source of pink granite aggregates in the Island and the present output of rock from the quarry is approximately 165,000 tonnes per annum. This compares with an approximate annual output of 200,000 tonnes from Ronez Quarry. Approximately half of the output from La Gigoulande is used for pre-cast products, blocks and ready-mix concrete and the remainder is sold as loose aggregate.

Demand for La Gigoulande aggregate has increased in the past few years, not only in response to the needs of the Island's buoyant construction industry, but also as a result of the “alkali-silica reactivity problem” related to Ronez rock, which arose with the Val de la Mare dam project. The legacy of this problem remains, despite the introduction of selective quarrying practice and quality control procedures at Ronez, and neither the Jersey New Waterworks Company nor the Public Services Department will specify Ronez pre-mix aggregate for certain projects.

There are numerous examples of developments in Jersey which have made use of La Gigoulande aggregates, including the St. Helier Waterfront, the Elizabeth Marina, Haute Vallée School and the new States Library.

In June 1996, Granite Products submitted an outline planning application for the expansion of the quarry into Fields 960, 961 and 967A, in order to extend the life of the quarry by some 20 years or so. The application was supported by an independent “Environmental Assessment Report”, undertaken on behalf of the company by Michael Felton Ltd. This report, which is to be up-dated in due course, generally concluded that the environmental impacts associated with the proposed development would be limited and would not pose significant constraints.

The 1996 application, together with informal approaches to expand other local mineral operations, have effectively been held in abeyance pending the completion of a minerals study and the formulation of a “minerals strategy” for the Island. An approved strategy is regarded as essential in order to provide a policy framework for the next 20 years and beyond, which will avoid the piecemeal consideration of individual proposals for quarry extensions.

The requirement for a mineral strategy was first outlined in the Strategic Policy Review “2000 and Beyond”, 1995 and reiterated in the States Environmental Charter, 1996. To this end, the Planning and Environment Committee commissioned independent consultants (Arup) to undertake a study of mineral supply options for the Island and to recommend a suitable policy framework. Arup's work has been the subject of extensive consultation with the mineral operators, local industry representatives, States' departments, environmental groups and other interested parties. Its report will shortly be published for public consultation, after which the Planning and Environment Committee will finalise its position and recommend a strategy for presentation to the States. It was originally intended that a report and proposition would be lodged for States' approval in August/September 1999, although much will depend on the nature of the response arising from the forthcoming public consultation exercise.

## **Consultations**

To assist its technical appraisal of the 'interim application', the Planning and Environment Committee has sought the views of a number of States departments and other relevant bodies. The majority of consultees do not oppose the application and their responses are summarised below -

Environmental Adviser

He recognises that the current application is relatively small and "*likely to affect the present situation in a very minor way*".

Health and Safety Inspectorate, Employment and Social Security

It points out that the present rock face heights at the quarry are "*at their maximum conducive to safe operation*", and confirms that the proposed extension will serve to avoid operational difficulties and permit on-going good quarrying practice by maintaining safe working benches.

Jersey New Waterworks Company Ltd.

It has no comment to make on the proposed quarry extension, although it emphasises the need to protect existing strategic raw water mains, which run along Le Mont Remon.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

It has no objection to the interim quarry extension, although it has reservations about the extent of the proposed agricultural land loss associated with the outstanding application from 1996.

Agricultural Land sub-Committee

Whilst regretting the loss of good agricultural land, the sub-Committee does not oppose the interim application to enlarge the quarry, in the present circumstances.

Water Resources Section, Public Services Department

It has expressed the view that the interim application will not have a significant impact on the hydrogeology in the area. However, it suggests that the outstanding application from 1996 could possibly give rise to significant hydrological changes, which will require detailed assessment.

The Water Resources Section also raises specific concerns about the threat currently being posed to the ecology of the stream in St. Peter's Valley from high levels of suspended solids. It suggests that discharges from the quarry are contributing to the problem and is seeking to undertake a "water quality audit" on the site. Granite Products Ltd. welcomes the opportunity to take part in the audit and demonstrate its procedures for maintaining satisfactory discharges. The Company also draws attention to the surface discharge from agricultural land upstream of the quarry, particularly at times of high rainfall, which it suggests would contribute to the level of suspended solids in the stream.

Environmental Health, Health and Social Services

This is the only officially consulted body which is not minded to support the interim application, on the grounds that a permit "*would seem to acknowledge acceptance of the intended request for significant further extension of activity before completion of the Jersey Mineral Study report.*" It suggests that the interim application should be judged following the completion of an up-dated Environmental Impact Assessment report, which would cover a number of issues, including -

- the scope for restoration of the site and potential problems associated with the landfill option;
- the possibility of lowering groundwater levels and the effect on nearby boreholes.

It is clear that the concerns underpinning these representations are based on certain misconceptions about the intention behind the current interim application and the manner in which the outstanding larger scale expansion proposals at the quarry will be addressed. As previously inferred, the Planning and Environment Committee will only consider the outstanding proposals dating from 1996, in the light of an approved Mineral Strategy and an up-dated Environmental Impact Assessment, which will address the end use of the quarry site and risks to ground water levels. In the meantime, the current application provides for a modest extension, which will enable the operations at the quarry to continue, whilst work on the Mineral Strategy is brought to a conclusion. The interim extension will not give rise to a significant increase in activity at the quarry. Noise levels and transport movements will not be increased, because the company will be continuing to employ the same methods

of extraction and means of delivery as they do at present. Similarly, there should be no increased risk to ground water levels, which was in any event, described as minimal in the 1996 Environmental Assessment.

The Environmental Health Department also draws attention to various complaints it has received in recent years regarding the existing operations at the quarry. These relate to nuisance from blasting noise and to the carryover of material onto the highway from vehicle movements off the site. With regard to the blasting issue, Granite Products Ltd. accept the need to keep noise emissions within environmentally acceptable limits. Blasting is monitored to ensure that the vibration levels are maintained below the levels advised by independent consultants. The company has also offered to monitor the blasts at all of the neighbouring properties, in order to allay the fears of local residents. On the issue of road cleanliness, it should be borne in mind that vehicles leaving the quarry are presently required to pass through a wheel wash to remove any excess material. The Company also uses a road sweeper to clean internal and external roads.

In the event of approval being granted for the interim application, the Environmental Health Department recommends that the permit should be subject to strict conditions relating to -

- maintenance of plant, machinery and vehicles;
- the storage of fuel, or contaminant liquid;
- washing of vehicle wheels;
- employing best available technology in the quarrying process to minimise dust generation;
- minimisation of noise affecting nearby dwellings;
- minimisation of ground vibration, air overpressure, noise and dust generation caused by blasting;
- containment and treatment of site run off.

### **Representations**

Written representations have been received from, or on behalf of four local residents. The principal concerns relate to noise levels and the risk of damage to property associated with blasting. However, other grounds for objection which have been cited include -

- impact on the landscape;
- loss of agricultural land;
- traffic generation;
- air pollution;
- the availability of alternative sources of aggregate from France and the United Kingdom; and
- the perceived precedents which would be set both for further expansion of the quarry and further developments in the "Sensitive Landscape Area of the Agricultural Priority Zone".

### **Conclusions**

The Planning and Environment Committee has visited the quarry and has familiarised itself with the current on-site operations. Having considered the current application in the light of all the relevant material planning and technical considerations, the Committee has concluded that the proposed rezoning of this small area of agricultural land for stone quarrying is wholly justifiable.

The interim proposals have numerous advantages in that it will enable Granite Products Ltd. to -

- (i) remain fully operational during the time required to complete a framework mineral strategy;
- (ii) maintain its role in aggregate supply and avoid an adverse impact on the building industry and consequently

the Island's economy;

- (iii) maintain "best quarrying practice" and essential operational safety;
- (iv) secure the jobs of its resident workforce.

Although the existing quarry is located in an area of landscape quality and the "water pollution safeguard area" and Field 961 is presently in agricultural use, it should also be recognised that -

- (i) La Gigoulande is a long-established and "approved" quarry site;
- (ii) the proposed loss of agricultural land is relatively small;
- (iii) the local topography and existing vegetation prevent clear views of the site from all but very few points;
- (iv) there will be no adverse visual impact on the wider landscape;
- (v) water management and the quarry floor level will remain unchanged, so there should be no adverse hydrological impact as a result of the proposal;
- (vi) there will be no fundamental changes to the existing operation. The rate of extraction and other site activities will remain at the present level, and there will be no increase on vehicle movements as a result of the proposal.

The Planning and Environment Committee is minded to approve the application subject to strict conditions relating to -

- the exact area of extraction;
- the hours of operation;
- maintenance of plant, machinery and vehicles;
- storage of fuel, or contaminant liquid;
- no material being extracted below self-draining level;
- no importation of materials;
- clearance of debris on adjacent roads;
- washing of vehicle wheels;
- controlling site water drainage;
- containment and treatment of site run-off;
- dust minimisation;
- minimising the impact of blasting;
- minimising levels of noise affecting nearby dwellings;
- realignment of the security fence;
- no buildings, fences, walls or means of enclosure;
- future restoration.

In the meantime, the Committee will continue to advance the on-going process which has been established to formulate a mineral strategy for the Island. Proposals will be brought to the States at the earliest opportunity. The longer term future of quarrying activities at La Gigoulande will eventually be determined in the light of a mineral strategy approved by the States

and an up-dated “Environmental Impact Assessment”.

June 1999





