

FRIENDS OF THE PEAK DISTRICT
CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

SMALL SCALE QUARRYING FOR LOCAL BUILDING MATERIALS
REVISED POLICY STATEMENT

Background

National context

Conflicts between conserving the built and natural environment are inherent in national policies and legislation, and are particularly acute in designated areas (National Parks, SSSIs, AONBs etc), where the relevant policies have been developed in a parallel rather than an integrated manner. While PPS7 and MPS1 state that designated areas should be protected from minerals development, PPG15 urges local authorities to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment. Annex C of PPG15 states that ‘the use of appropriate local materials is very desirable. Local planning authorities should encourage their production, and may wish to build up banks of materials to assist appropriate alteration and repair’. This applies also to traditional roofing materials, where re-use on the original building is desirable and the cannibalisation of material from other buildings is discouraged. Annex 3 of MPS1 specifically addresses the need to safeguard and utilise scarce resources of natural building and roofing stone for sustainable repair and other uses, including new build.

Local issues

At a local scale conserving the built and natural heritage are fundamentally essential to rural character and local distinctiveness. However, these aims can conflict in the case of small scale quarrying for traditional local building materials. Protecting local distinctiveness depends upon quarrying rocks locally and this often means that sites valued for their natural characteristics are prime candidates for supplying building stone. CPRE’s broader campaign aims to discourage quarrying but we cannot ignore the fact that the most sustainable and authentic way to preserve built heritage is to use locally won products.

Policy Aims

- Where necessary, and only in appropriate locations, support small scale quarrying for building stone (normally for local use)
- In sensitive national and internationally designated areas and sites (e.g. National Parks, AONBs, SSSIs, SAMs, NNRs, SPAs/SACs), only support quarry development where environmental impact is low and there is established need for the stone

- Where appropriate, investigate and support the use of substitute or synthetic building materials subject to visual impact and their environmental 'footprint'

Guiding Principles

A. Small Scale Quarrying – What is appropriate?

We recognise that there is a need for stone roofing tiles and other materials to renovate and repair vernacular buildings and maintain the character of rural settlements. CPRE will support small scale quarrying for such materials where there are assurances that:

- the proposal is limited in visual and auditory intrusion to residents and countryside users;
- the development will have limited traffic and road safety impacts;
- the hours of operation will avoid the most sensitive times for residents and countryside users;
- the development will be small scale and in keeping with local character;
- any machinery that is necessary is limited in extent and size (small scale cutting machines, for example, would be appropriate);
- the product is predominantly for local need and extraction rates are commensurate with such use;
- the permission is time limited and includes specific and detailed restoration plans.

B. Designated sites and areas

International/European - Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are of international importance and are normally inappropriate even for small-scale minerals operations. Their functioning depends upon maintaining the integrity of the whole site and this should not be adversely affected by development unless there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. A full assessment of the likely impact of the development should be undertaken in accordance with the Habitats Regulations to inform the local planning authority's decision. FPD and CPRE SY would be opposed to development within such sites unless the Appropriate Assessment indicated acceptably low impact and there was proven need for the stone.

National - Where planning permission is sought for small scale quarrying within nationally-designated landscapes and sites (National Parks, AONBs, NNRs, SSSIs etc) we would only support development where, in general accordance with MPS1 Annex 3:

- there is a proven need for the material;
- alternative sites or sources have been considered and discounted;
- no significant environmental impact was likely.

C. Alternative Materials

Support may be given to the use of synthetic or other substitute materials, particularly for new build projects, where there are assurances that:

- the visual appearance of the finished product used matches the vernacular style of the surrounding settlement and continues to do so after initial weathering;
- the environmental footprint of the production of such materials is sustainable and on balance less damaging than quarrying locally for the materials (i.e. in terms of, transportation of materials to production site, waste and pollution created during the production process, transferring the finished products to the building site, total energy consumed, depleting other important natural resources)