

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 78 Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2002

Appeal by London Rock Supplies Ltd

Land at White Cross Farm, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

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Against the refusal of planning permission by Oxfordshire County Council for application MW.0115/21 – Extraction and processing of sand and gravel including the construction of new site access roads, landscaping and screening bunds, minerals washing plant and other associated infrastructure with restoration to agriculture and nature conservation areas, using inert fill.

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**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND** between:  
London Rock Supplies Ltd & Oxfordshire County Council

Planning Inspectorate Reference: U3100/W/25/3361505

July 2025

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This is a Landscape and Visual Statement of Common Ground (LVSoCG) made between the following parties:

- London Rock Supplies Limited (“the Appellant”); and
- Oxfordshire County Council (“the Council”).

1.2 This LVSoCG has been jointly prepared by the Appellant and Council and sets out the factual background to the Appeal and those landscape and visual matters on which the parties agree. It also sets out the residual landscape and visual matters upon which the parties are not agreed.

## 2. Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Proposals

2.1 Full details of the landscape mitigation would be subject to planning conditions. Landscape mitigation is shown in outline on the Concept Restoration Plan (**CD9.04**) and Illustrative Landscape Enhancement Plan (**Figure 6** of Mr Furber’s evidence).

2.2 It is noted that the following updated mitigation measures have been proposed to be implemented prior to extraction:

- temporary willow screen planting for the duration of the extraction/infilling phase alongside the straw bales;
- permanent realignment of a 200m section of the Thames Path National Trail opposite Carmel College back to its definitive route facilitated by selective removal of blackthorn scrub; and
- possible implementation of a species rich wildflower meadow within the 30m wide corridor adjacent to the River Thames.

## 3. Site security

3.1 The 2m high post and wire perimeter fence, where required during the extraction, infilling and restoration phase, would comprise timber posts, with a double strand of barbed wire to deter public access and mesh that is deer proof. Warning signs saying ‘Quarry- Keep Out’ would be attached to the fencing at intervals. Security gates would also be required at the Site entrance and exit.

#### 4. Landscape baseline matters on which the parties agree

- 4.1 In addition to the Site description in the Statement of Common Ground, the following factual matters are agreed.
- 4.2 The Landscape Character Assessment by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils – Sept 2024 (**CD 16.02**) is the most up to date published document that describes the landscape character of the Site and surrounding area that lies within Landscape Character Area LCA 13D: South Thames Lower Vale.
- 4.3 It is agreed that the most up to date and relevant published landscape strategies and guidelines that are relevant to this appeal are contained in The Landscape Character Assessment by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils – Sept 2024 (**CD 16.02**), and advise to:
- Maintain the valued recreational use of the landscape and consider opportunities to introduce additional public rights of way connectivity;
  - Consider impact of development on both close and distant views from both the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and the Chilterns National Landscape, and how any new development would impact on the special qualities of both;
  - Manage grazing marsh habitats to enhance their biodiversity value and appearance; ensure best practice management through suitable grazing regimes and avoiding agrochemical and fertiliser inputs; manage recreational routes to avoid/minimise disturbance; and manage scrub vegetation appropriately to maintain the open character;
  - Seek opportunities to enhance connectivity with other habitats nearby by creating green corridors and networks; and
  - Maintain existing woodland cover and look to increase this to provide ecological value and help to limit the urbanising influence of development and busy roads, whilst maintaining characteristic open long views across the landscape.
- 4.4 The Tranquillity Assessment by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils – Aug 2024 (CD 16.03) is the most up to date published document that describes the tranquillity of the district council areas.
- 4.5 It is agreed that the Position Statement on Setting, entitled 'Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB' (**CD16.06**), that was adopted in June 2011, is the most recent guidance from the Chilterns National Landscape on setting.

## 5. Baseline visual matters on which parties agree

- 5.1 Whilst precise viewpoint locations may vary, the range of views presented in the ES, and in both the Appellant and Council's proof of evidence, are representative of the views that may be obtained from publicly accessible locations within and surrounding the Site.
- 5.2 It is agreed that the most adversely affected viewpoints are from receptors in close proximity to the site.
- 5.3 The LVIA (CD1.16) and Mr Woodward's proof of evidence are supported by some winter baseline photography from several locations.

## 6. Methodology and Scope of Assessment

- 6.1 It is agreed that there were no queries related to the LVIA methodology (CD1.16) during the consultation responses, however the Landscape Officer disagreed on the application of the methodology with respect to several assessment conclusions.
- 6.2 It is agreed that GLVIA3 best practice guidance is not intended to be prescriptive and does not provide a detailed 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation.
- 6.3 Both parties agree with the Landscape Institute advice in LITGN-23024-01 (CD16.05) which states that:

***"It should always be remembered that the purpose of undertaking LVIA (or LVA) is to express clearly to decision-makers the landscape professional's judgement about changes to the landscape and views. In particular, the purpose is to explain which aspects of landscape and visual change are more important to the decision to be made (and why), and which are not (and why). Achieving this outcome is more fundamental to good LVIA than the detailed mechanics of specific assessment methodologies.***

***Landscape and visual resources (and changes to them) are not easily measurable. Therefore, those undertaking LVIA have to proceed by a process of description, analysis and reasoning, leading to assessment conclusions"***

## 7. Landscape matters on which parties agree

- 7.1 It is agreed that there would be no significant effects upon the Special Qualities of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape as a result of the Proposed Development. The Appellant assesses that there would be no effect, whereas the Council assess a Slight effect (Not

Significant).

- 7.2 In terms of the Special Qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape, whilst the parties disagree on whether the indirect landscape effects experienced would be Significant or not, it is agreed that adverse effects resulting from extraction and infilling would last for the duration of the mineral extraction works (or to the equivalent of Year 1 of the full restoration).
- 7.3 In terms of landscape character, it is agreed that there would be no significantly adverse effect on the National, Regional or District published landscape character areas.

## **8. Visual matters on which parties agree**

- 8.1 With the exception of upper floor private views that would potentially be experienced from the Wet Boathouse, assessed as Significant by the Council (but not the Appellant), no other significant effects upon private visual amenity are predicted by either party.
- 8.2 Both parties agree that the potential temporary visual effects that could be experienced from the Wet Boathouse, would not be so great that the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold would be met, with reference to Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/19 (CD16.04).
- 8.3 Whilst there is disagreement upon the degree of visual effect experienced by users of the River Thames and Thames Path and whether these effects are significant or not, both parties agree that the Proposed Development would not result in significant effects upon views experienced by any other receptor where there is public access.



## **9. Landscape and Visual Matters on which parties disagree**

- 9.1 The Appellant considers that the use and placement of straw bales as temporary mitigation during the operational phase would be appropriate to the locality, however the Council disagrees because it considers their arrangement would be incongruous and the safety and security fencing and willow screen planting through which the straw bales would be seen would be intrusive in nature.
- 9.2 The Council considers that other mitigation measures in the form of planting would not reach sufficient maturity during the course of the site operations to effectively screen the mineral workings. The Appellant disagrees and notes that the new planting would reinforce the screening or filtering effect of existing perimeter planting that would be retained.
- 9.3 The Appellant considers that there would be some temporary indirect adverse effects upon

the special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape, however of the 13 Special Qualities (SQs), only two SQs would be affected temporarily and to a not significant level. The Council disagree and assess that there would be a Large Adverse effect that is significant upon Special Qualities, during the main mineral extraction activity.

- 9.4 The Council considers there would be a direct significant effect on the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. The Appellant disagrees and considers there would be a temporary Moderate adverse direct effect on the Site that lies in the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape.
- 9.5 The Appellant considers that views experienced by users of the Thames Path and River Thames passing the Site would be temporarily affected to a Moderate adverse degree that is not significant, whereas the Council considers these effects as Large adverse and Significant for the duration of the mineral extraction activities.
- 9.6 The Council considers that the Tranquillity Assessment by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils – Aug 2024 (**CD16.03**) provides a useful district level assessment of tranquillity but that it is not site specific, where a more nuanced experience is felt. The Council consider the tranquillity of the site to be greater than that indicated within the Tranquillity Assessment. The Appellant disagrees and considers that the Tranquillity Assessment (**CD16.03**) provides *‘...landscape evidence contributing to the Joint Local Plan that will guide development in the districts to 2041’* The Tranquillity Assessment was supported by a stakeholder workshop to ensure that *“a diverse range of perspectives inform the development of the tranquillity indicators in the study area”*. The tranquillity mapping is presented at 50m resolution that the Appellant considers is a more reliable baseline.
- 9.7 The Council has undertaken its own site based landscape character assessment and consider that the effect of the mineral extraction works during operation would result in Large Adverse and Significant effect on the landscape character of the Site. The Appellant considers that the temporary changes to the landscape and the progressive extraction and restoration would represent a Moderate Adverse and Not Significant effect. Following the restoration, the Appellant assesses that there would be a long term Moderate Beneficial change to landscape character that is Not Significant.
- 9.8 The Council consider that three visual receptors would experience a Large Adverse effect which would be Significant during the course of the phased extraction works and progressive restoration. These are the Thames Path National Trail, the River Thames and the Wet Boathouse. The Appellant considers that the temporary visual effects experienced by the aforementioned receptors and the potential private view from the Wet Boathouse would be Moderate Adverse and Not Significant.
- 9.9 The Council consider that a full set of winter views of the Appeal site should have been provided in the ES LVIA in order to make a thorough judgement of the effectiveness of

existing vegetation cover in and around the site. The Appellant notes that best practice guidance requires consideration to be given to the seasonal differences in vegetation and that *“the timing of the assessment work and the project programme will also influence the practicality of covering more than one season.”* (paragraph 6.28 of GLVIA3 - **CD16.11**)

Signed on behalf of Minerals Planning Authority		Signed on behalf of Appellant	
Organisation	Oxfordshire County Council	Organisation	Pegasus Group
		Signature	
Name	David Periam	Name	Neil Furber
Qualification	MRTPI	Qualification	BSc (Dual Hons) Dip LA CMLI
Date	01 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	Date	01 <sup>st</sup> July 2025