



8th October 2009

Nick Dunn  
Land & Mineral Management Ltd  
The Roundhouse Cottages  
Bridge Street  
Frome  
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Dear Mr Dunn

## **PROPOSED EXTENSION TO HAM HILL SOUTH QUARRY**

1. It has come to the attention of the English Stone Forum (the aims and membership of the Forum are at Annex A) that due to geological circumstances the remaining life of permitted reserves of Ham Hill stone are now very limited and that, as a consequence, a planning application is to be submitted for an extension to the quarry. It is also appreciated that this raises issues because the proposed extension is within an area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

2. The planning application highlights a tension between two important heritage matters:

a) the need to preserve the integrity of ancient monuments; and

b) the need to secure appropriate stone for the repair, maintenance and restoration of historic buildings and structures.

3. It is not for the English Stone Forum to weigh these issues. That is a matter for the relevant Planning Committee. However we would hope that following comments should be taken into account by that Committee.

a) Ham Stone can only be found in a very limited number of sites in South Somerset and, due to the depth of the deposit, it can only viably be quarried on Ham Hill. The stone has been used both locally and nationally for vernacular, bespoke and dimensional building products and, importantly, is found nationally in numerous listed buildings. Therefore future supplies are essential for preservation of these structures. The use of alternative stones would be most undesirable on both aesthetic grounds (not matching the existing fabric of the building) and technical grounds (the use of materials with different physical properties and, especially porosity, can lead to rapid deteriorating of adjacent stone). There is no known suitable alternative.

b) It is fully appreciated that the most desirable approach to archaeological sites is to leave the remains undisturbed in the ground. However this is a case where there is an important need to secure adequate supplies of stone for future repair, maintenance and restorations of nationally important, and other structures. The Forum believes that this quarrying proposal should be accepted, in the public

interest, subject to conditions to secure adequate excavation, recording and preservation of any archaeological remains that may be encountered,

4. Please note that views expressed in this response are those of the Forum. These are not necessarily views of those organisations that representatives attending the English Stone Forum Committee are drawn from.

Yours sincerely

*B R Marker*

Brian Marker  
Chair English Stone forum