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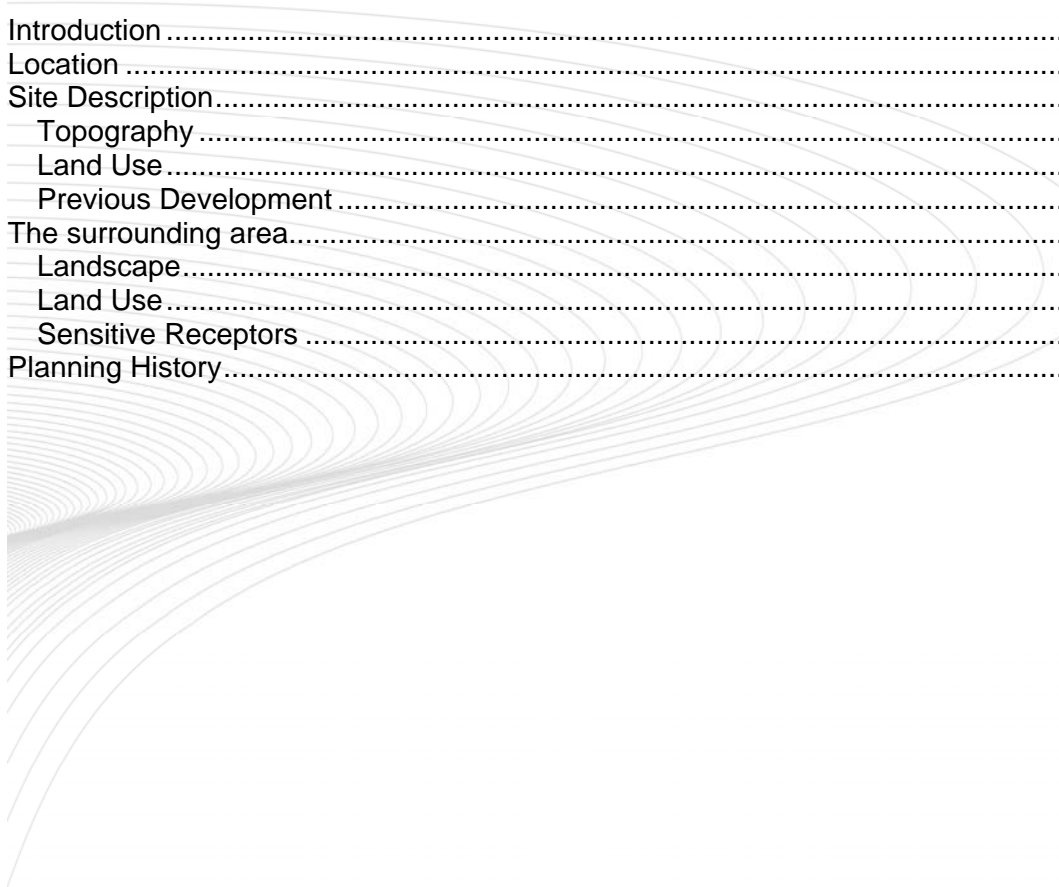
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## INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As set out in Section 1, Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations provides that an ES should include a description of the application site.
- 2.2 This section describes the existing physical and environmental characteristics of the application site and its surrounding environs. Allied to this, other sections within the ES provide descriptions of the application site in relation to particular environmental topics, providing *inter alia* “baseline” surveys. In this respect, Section 7 describes the landscape character and topography of both the application site and its surroundings, and Section 8 describes the local highway network. The geological and water environment are described in Section 10, whilst the ecological interests are described in Section 11. Finally, cultural heritage interests are set out in Section 12.
- 2.3 These existing conditions provide a base against which the effects of the proposals may be evaluated.

## LOCATION

- 2.4 Newhurst Quarry forms part of the Charnwood Quarry complex, which comprises two former hardstone quarries; Newhurst Quarry and Longcliffe Quarry. Newhurst Quarry lies approximately 5km to the west of Loughborough town centre and 1.5 km to the south of the centre of Shepshed (measured to the nearest boundary of the quarry). More specifically, Junction 23 of the M1 lies at the north eastern corner of the application site. In terms of local government and administration, it is situated within the County of Leicestershire, the Borough of Charnwood, and the Town Council of Shepshed. Notwithstanding this, the boundary with the District of North West Leicestershire lies approximately 1.5km to the south west of the quarry complex.
- 2.5 The Charnwood Quarry complex is bisected by the M1 motorway. To the west of the M1 is the larger Newhurst Quarry: it lies within a triangular area bounded by the A512 to the north, the M1 to the east and Ingleberry Road to the west. Longcliffe Quarry lies within an area bounded by the M1 to the west, Ingleberry Road to the south, Longcliffe Golf Course to the north and Nanpanton Road to the east. The two quarries are linked by a tunnel under the M1.
- 2.6 In terms of the proposals for the ERF, the applicant intends to develop the eastern part of Newhurst Quarry, lying between the quarry void and M1. The proposals would not affect Longcliffe Quarry, or the vast majority of the void in Newhurst Quarry.
- 2.7 For identification purposes, the proposed application site is centred in National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 488 180 and shown edged in red on the Drawing NH 2/1.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.8 The application site is located along the eastern edge of Newhurst Quarry. It is bounded by the A512, offices of Hanson UK and a former tile works to the north; the M1 to the east; the quarry void to the west and with other former quarry land (including an active concrete batching plant) to the south. Land associated with Newhurst Quarry measures around 39ha in extent; however the vast proportion of this comprises the quarry void and associated tips/screen mounds (which extend along the northern, western and southern edges of the void) and margins. These areas do not form part of the area to be developed. The application site itself comprises 15.5 ha, and is shown edged in red on the plans within this document, and in particular, Drawing NH 2/2.
- 2.9 The application site is broadly rectangular in shape, lying between the quarry void and M1 and extending up to, and including part of, the A512. Historically, it comprised the aggregate processing plant for the quarry complex; however all processing plant has now been removed. Mature broadleaf woodland exists along the north-eastern and eastern edges of the application site, whilst the southern and western edges are characterised by disused quarry workings and ancillary land.

## **Topography**

- 2.10 In terms of topographic levels, the application site forms a plateau upon which the former aggregate processing plant was situated, with levels ranging between 90m AOD to around 106m AOD. At the site entrance, the level is 92.4m AOD rising to 95.9m AOD at the former weighbridge, before falling to between 91.5m AOD and 93.3m AOD along the woodland edge. Within the central part of the site, levels are generally around 93m AOD to 95m AOD, and rise further within the western parts of the application site. Gradients are typically in the region of 1:10 to 1:30. Drawing NH 2/3 illustrates the topography of the application site and immediate environs.

## **Land Use**

- 2.11 As noted above, the application site forms part of a former hardstone quarry with associated ancillary infrastructure, including weighbridges and attendant office and workshop/garage. Quarrying activity has now ceased and processing plant and associated infrastructure has been removed.
- 2.12 A dense mature belt of mostly deciduous (including Sycamore, Birch and Poplars trees) with some evergreen (including pines) tree planting is located around the eastern and northern edges of the application site. At approximately 20m wide and standing in the region of 10-15m in height the tree belt runs much of the length of the 180m long site, breaking briefly to the south of the application site near the operational concrete batching plant.

## Previous Development

- 2.13 The following paragraphs provides an overview of the historical research conducted for the application site, as reported in the Phase 1 Preliminary Land Quality Assessment (contained in Appendix 2/1 to Volume 1). Information was obtained by reviewing historical map extracts provided within the Groundsure™ report (Appendix C, Phase 1 Preliminary Land Quality Assessment).
- 2.14 The age, general type of activity and land use can often be determined from the type and layout of structures depicted on Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs. However, specific elements of site operations cannot normally be determined from such extracts. Historical map extracts were reviewed for the years 1883 to 2002; these were supplemented by a recent aerial photograph.
- 2.15 Using map records and the aerial photograph, it has been able to infer historical uses of the application site and features of environmental significance in the surrounding area as described in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1  
Historical Land Uses**

Date	On-Site	Off-Site
1883	The western part of the application site is open fields; a canal and road run down the eastern side of the application site and beyond these is woodland forming the western part of Brickhill Plantation. A road runs east west (approximately following the present day A512) but curves into and out of the far northwest corner of the application site in order to cross the canal.	The application site is mostly surrounded by agricultural land. Woodland (Newhurst Plantation) adjacent to the west of the application site contains 2 small quarries, 100m and 300m to the west. Shortcliff Brook flows approximately southwest to northeast to within 20m of the southeast corner of the application site. Charnwood Forest Railway runs east to west 200m north of the application site.
1901	The northern end of the application site is occupied by a railway in the bed of the old canal with a building linked to a <i>Tramway</i> that runs to the eastern edge of <i>Charnwood Granite Quarries</i> and connects to (presumed) processing buildings on the western side of the application site. The <i>Tramway</i> extends southwards beyond the southern application site boundary. Stone stockpiles (quarry waste) are present in the centre of the southern part of the application site and the <i>old canal</i> now terminates inside the boundary, close to its southern edge.	The small quarry to the west of the application site has expanded to form <i>Charnwood Granite Quarries</i> . Two further quarries linked to the <i>tramway</i> crossing the application site are present in <i>Stonepit Plantation</i> 150m south of the application site and at <i>Ingleberry Rock</i> 500m S. No other significant changes to the surroundings are shown within 1km of the application site.
1921	Stone stockpiles and processing areas for Charnwood Granite Quarry have expanded eastwards into the application site.	The quarries to the west and south have expanded. Two small houses are present close to south of the application site entrance.
1922	No significant changes to the application site are shown.	No significant changes to the application site surroundings

Date	On-Site	Off-Site
1938	No significant changes to the application site are shown.	No significant changes to the application site surroundings.
1950	No significant changes to the application site are shown.	No significant changes to the application site surroundings.
1967-68	The tramways within the application site are no longer shown but a rail line remains in the bed of the old canal. A conveyor and assorted processing buildings have been constructed towards the centre of the application site. The garage and quarry office buildings are present.	A series of spoil heaps are present adjacent to the southern and western boundary of the application site associated with the quarry to the west. Two small <i>Refuse Tips</i> are recorded adjacent to and 100m west of the application site boundary. The M1 is present beyond the eastern application site boundary.
1981-85	No significant changes to the application site are shown. It appears in use as an area for processing excavated stone.	A series of buildings, assumed to be offices are present to the west of the northern part of the application site; with a series of industrial buildings beyond. The quarry remains to the west of the application site.
1992	No significant changes to the application site are shown.	A factory, mill and depot have been constructed 75m north of the application site beyond the A512. A works building has been constructed 100m south of the application site; it is understood that this served the Charnwood Quarries Complex to the south-east of the M1
2002	No significant changes to the application site are shown; it appears to remain in use as a quarry stone processing area. An aerial photograph is presented in Figure 1 overleaf.	No significant changes to the application site surroundings.
2008	The conveyors and processing buildings are no longer shown on site mapping.	No significant changes to the application site surroundings.

2.16 The historical maps indicate that the application site was largely occupied by agricultural land crossed by a canal until the late 1800's. The majority of the application site was then used to process granite from the Charnwood Quarries until the early 2000's. This is examined further in Section 12 below.

## THE SURROUNDING AREA

### Landscape

2.17 The application site is situated on the northern edge of an area of high ground, known as Charnwood Forest, which overlooks the Trent and Soar Valleys to the north and east respectively.

2.18 Immediately to the west of the application site, the landforms become more irregular associated with stockpiles at elevations of 112m AOD, and near flat benches to the steep rock faces of the disused Newhurst Quarry, which has a quarry rim at around 105m -110m AOD and reaches a maximum depth of 14m AOD. The quarry measures in the region of 450m by 340m.

2.19 Adjacent to the quarry, levels continue to rise to the south, reaching 137m AOD at a screen mound located at the apex formed by the intersection of M1

and Ingleberry Road (natural levels being around 130m AOD). The topography to the west, south and east is undulating, with high points of 201m AOD reached at Ives Head (SK 477 170) to the west, and 180m AOD at Roe's Plantation (SK 497 162) to the south east. To the north and east, the topography descends into the Trent valley.

2.20 Topography in the local area of Charnwood Forest is typically rolling and the land continues to rise and fall associated with localised high points such as:

- Buck Hill (at 225+m AOD), approximately 2.5km away and Beacon Hill (at 230m AOD) approximately 3.8km from site to the south east; and
- Ives Head (at 201m AOD) lies approximately 1.4km away and Timberwood Hill (at 240m AOD) lies approximately 3.8km from the site to the south west.

2.21 Topography in the local area of the Langley Lowlands and Soar Valley begins to drop away with low points such as:

- Grace Dieu Brook and Black Brook (at 55m - 60m AOD), approximately 3km away from the application site to the north where they pass beneath the M1; and
- River Soar (at 35m - 38m AOD) lies approximately 5km away at Zouch to the north and 8km away from the site between Quorn and Barrow upon Soar to the east.

2.22 Further north the land rises again around East Midlands Airport at elevations above 80m AOD at over 7km away, and around the edge of the Wolds at Rempstone and Prestwold, at elevations above 60m AOD, at over 9km away.

2.23 Vegetation cover in the surrounding Charnwood Forest areas to the south are relatively well wooded with a mixture of grassland, heathland, copses and shelter belts.

2.24 The lower-lying lands to the north and east are almost wholly agricultural and predominantly pasture. Tree cover within the valleys are variable with almost no woodland and strips of hedgerows and trees providing the main cover.

## Land Use

2.25 Land use adjoining the application site comprises the former quarry workings and ancillary land; the only operational element being the ready mixed concrete batching plant operated by Hanson UK.

2.26 Planning permission also exists for waste management uses within and adjoining the application site; the void has permission to be infilled with residual non-hazardous wastes, with the adjoining land benefitting from planning permission for a waste transfer station, materials recycling facility, in-vessel composting plant and landfill gas/leachate management infrastructure.

- 2.27 To the north and north-west of the application site, along the frontage of the A512, is a belt of industrial development, incorporating a Highways Agency depot, GLW Feeds, BOAL UK, a lorry park, Fred Sherwood and Sons (Transport) Ltd depot, Charnwood Bricks and Meggitt Polymer Solutions. Beyond this lie residential areas of Shepshed.
- 2.28 To the south of the application site, the area is more rural, interspersed with isolated farmsteads and properties. Immediately to the east is the M1 corridor, beyond which is an area designated as a “*green wedge*” in the Borough Local Plan, and comprises a golf course, Garendon Park and agricultural land, before the urban fringe of Loughborough is reached.

**Sensitive Receptors**

- 2.29 The application site is predominantly free of international and national land use constraints; a geological SSSI is located within the quarry void to the west of the area of development. The application site is located within the National Forest, and designated as an “*area of particularly attractive countryside*” in the Charnwood Borough Local Plan<sup>1</sup>; this designation covers large tracts of land within the south western and south eastern parts of the Borough.
- 2.30 In relation to residential properties, the closest is located on the northern side of the A512 (Ashby Road East), adjacent to the Highways Agency depot, approximately 100m from the internal access roadway and 230m from the northern façade of the ERF building. Ingleberry Lodge, located to the southwest of the facility is approximately 430m from the southern building façade. Other properties, including the closest residential area in Shepshed, are located in excess of 500m from the building.
- 2.31 Table 2-2 below sets out the environmental constraints within a 2.5km radius of the centre of the application site.

**Table 2-2  
Summary of Environmental Receptors**

Criteria	Comment
Air Quality	There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the immediate environs of the application site. Further afield, Charnwood BC has identified an AQMA in Loughborough due to traffic in the Town Centre. North West Leicestershire DC has identified two areas; one in Kegworth and one along the M1 to the north of the site.
Cultural Heritage	No designations of cultural heritage interest are located within the boundary of the site. The 2007 ES for the IWMF (see paragraph 2.32 <i>et seq</i> below) indicates that there is negligible potential for in situ archaeological features, deposits or stray finds to survive as a result of past operations. Approximately 300m to the northeast of the site boundary lies a registered Park and Garden (Garendon); this park covers an area of around 190ha. Within Garendon Park is a Scheduled Monument (Cistercian Abbey and mansion at Garendon), together with four listed buildings.
Ecology	There are no ecological designations lying within the site boundary. Outwith the application

<sup>1</sup> Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991 – 2006, Adopted January 2004  
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Criteria	Comment
	site, two biological SSSIs (Blackbrook Reservoir and Beacon Hill, Hangingstone and Outwoods) lie approximately 2km from the application site, as does a Local Nature Reserve (Morley Quarry). Section 11 provides further details of all such designations within 10km of the applications site
Geology and Soils	The site is not in agricultural use and is devoid of soil cover. Within the mineral void is a geological SSSI and a RIGS. Under the proposals the main features of interest would not be disturbed.
Hydrology and Hydrogeology	The application site is not located with a floodplain or source protection zone.
Landscape	The site is located within the northern fringe of an Area of Attractive Countryside in the Borough Local Plan and the National Forest. Part of the peripheral woodland (Brickhill Plantation) is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.
Other	East Midlands Airport lies approximately 8.5km to the north. Based on CAA guidelines <sup>2</sup> , the site is within the "outer horizontal surface". As such, the maximum elevation of the building must be below 236mAOD.

## PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.32 Planning permission to quarry Newhurst and Longcliffe Quarries was granted in 1947 and a number of subsequent permissions were granted between the 1950's and 1970's to extend the quarry workings. Allied to this, several permissions have been granted for ancillary operations, including the disposal of overburden and ancillary plant, buildings and other similar development associated with quarrying.
- 2.33 The mineral planning permissions at the site have been subject to review, as required by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 and the Environment Act 1995, and two<sup>3</sup> separate, but identical sets of planning conditions covering the Charnwood Quarry complex were issued by Leicestershire County Council on 8th July 1998.
- 2.34 Conditions attached to the reviewed permissions deal with the restoration and aftercare of the site, requiring the submission of a restoration scheme within 3 months of the cessation of mineral extraction. Whilst a detailed restoration scheme has yet to be submitted and approved, restoration proposals were submitted as part of the review submission. These indicated that both Newhurst and Longcliffe Quarries would be allowed to flood naturally to create two water areas whilst land occupied by plant and equipment would be cleared and returned to a mixture of native grassland and heathland. No specific use was proposed for the water areas or the surrounding heathland and grassland other than its amenity conservation value.
- 2.35 The site has also been the subject of two planning applications for integrated waste management facilities. The first application was lodged in 1999 by Hanson Waste Management. Whilst the Council in 2002 resolved to grant planning permission, subject to the applicant entering into a section 106

<sup>2</sup> CAP 168 Licensing of Aerodromes. CAA, December 2008

<sup>3</sup> One set being issued under the 1991 and 1995 Acts respectively.'

agreement, the application was withdrawn in 2005 due to the landfill element of the scheme not complying with the Landfill Regulations.

2.36 More recently, in 2006 Biffa submitted a planning application, accompanied by an Environmental Statement, for a facility to handle approximately 375,000 tonnes of non hazardous waste per annum. The facility included provision for:

- Front-end treatment facilities comprising:
  - A Waste Reception Building/Waste Transfer Station with a total capacity of 330,000 tpa incorporating a Materials Recovery Facility with a capacity of approximately 55,000 tpa.
  - An In Vessel Composting (IVC) plant to process approximately 45,000 tpa of compostable waste.
- A fully engineered landfill for the controlled landfilling of approximately 275,000 tpa of residual waste.
- Associated ancillary infrastructure and services development, such as offices, internal roads and weighbridge to allow for all activities at the site, and
- Improvements to the existing site access.

2.37 The planning application was taken to the Development Control and Regulatory Board Meeting on 13 March 2008 where members resolved to grant planning permission, again subject to the applicant signing a S106 legal agreement. This agreement has now been completed and the Decision Notice was issued on 13 February 2009.