

CROSS-CURRICULAR A HOLE LOT OF FUSS



STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET



SECTION 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

As with all industrial development, there are many environmental concerns surrounding quarrying. The groups most concerned about these issues are the local community, wildlife and environmental organisations and local authorities.

MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

LOSS OF COUNTRYSIDE

One of the main concerns surrounding quarrying is the impact that it leaves on the rural environment. Some people are not in favour of quarrying due to the disruption in their rural way of life.



Operational quarry - quarrying changes the landscape

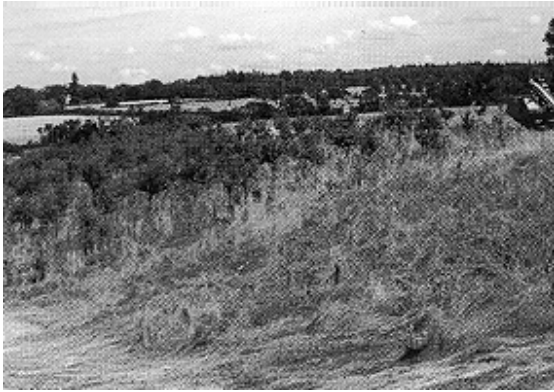


Restored quarry

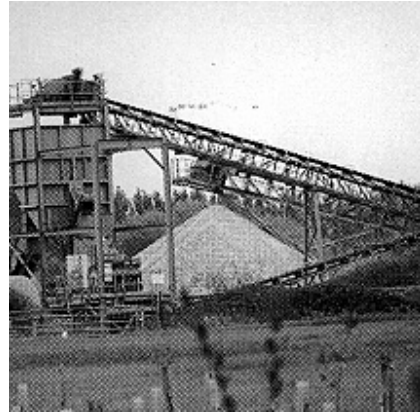
As well as the excavations - the processing plant, machinery and staff buildings also make an impact, temporarily altering the skyline.

Attempts to reduce the visual impact of the quarry are made by landscaping and physically screening the site with trees and by other means. For example, the mounds of earth excavated before extraction are also used to screen the sites.

This issue is of particular concern to the local community who will lose their rural surroundings and view; this being replaced by an industrial development. The screens are put into place in an attempt to integrate the development into the local surroundings, but they also change the landscape to a certain extent.



Screening



Changing the skyline

NATURE CONSERVATION

Quarrying can affect wildlife but companies take steps to protect wildlife interests. They also create new habitats and enhance existing interest by their landscaping and restoration schemes.

AIR QUALITY

Quarrying has the potential to cause dust and this can be of concern to residents, but environmental regulations and the operators good working practices ensure that dust does not cause a nuisance.

TRAFFIC

Depending on the roads in the locality there may be difficulties of congestion and the capacity of the road to take the lorries, in some cases vibration danger and road damage can add concern.

NOISE AND LIGHT

Noise from the quarry and disturbance from the lighting used for any night work can be one of the main concerns of residents living nearby. It can also be one of the most intrusive aspects of the industrial activity.



Site Dumper



Quarry Plant

WATER POLLUTION

Discharges into waterway is another environmental issue. Although this is controlled and monitored, there is a concern that pollution of the waterways is a risk.

Interference with the groundwater, such as lowering the 'water table' is also a concern as this can have much wider effects on other sources of water in the region.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES

In addition to stringent legislation, measures are taken by the quarrying companies to prevent these environmental concerns becoming a reality and there is an 'environmental code' for them to follow, which covers all of the above concerns. For example, quarrying companies are only allowed to work on the site for a certain number of hours every day, which have been agreed with local residents beforehand. It is hoped that this arrangement will keep any disruption for the local community to the minimum.

Quarrying companies attempt to make their impact on the local environment minimal. However, no amount of environmental measures will prevent these environmental concerns arising and, as with any development of the countryside, an environmental cost must be paid. When any proposal for new extraction is made, questions should be asked by local residents to ensure that all appropriate environmental protection measures are taken.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Campaigners Guide to Minerals - available from The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). Tel 020 7976 6433. E-mail: info@cpre.org.uk Refer to their website - www.cpre.org.uk - select "publications" from the side margin, then select "Campaigners Guides and Briefings" (second on the list) - then scroll down until you find the relevant entry.

Refer to the Quarry Products Association website - www.qpa.org, under the "Environment" button