

NRAGED

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29th March 2006

Please reply to Ditchingham Cottage address

J W Gough Esq
David L Walker
Albion House
89 Station Road
Eckington
Sheffield S21 4FW

Dear Mr Gough

RE: Lafarge Aggregates Limited - Proposed Sand and Gravel Quarry off Norwich Road Ditchingham

Thank you for your recent letter enclosing the photographs of Philip Parker receipt of which is acknowledged. I have passed these to Professor Tom Williamson for his comment and he has confirmed my opinion that whilst the pictures themselves are fine (albeit incomplete and not in the best format) the comments on the photos are both unhelpful and misleading. They most certainly are not agreed.

The purpose of the joint visit was to take photos from agreed vantage points that can be shown to English Heritage and other historical and landscape consultees and interested parties in order to assist them in reaching their own conclusions as to the impact of the proposed quarry on the historical landscape and the Hall and its Park. It is therefore wholly inappropriate to include on the pictures the applicant's expert's personal interpretation of the views which are blatantly subjective and aimed at playing down the degree of visibility that exists and can be readily appreciated by an observer on the ground. Comments such as "*these are not important views within the Park*" and "*existing hedge and rising landform currently screens views of site...*" and "*site hidden behind roadside shelterbelt*" are simply inappropriate and we are most surprised that they should have been included.

What is required is simple objective information identifying the location of the site and key features of it and the landscape. It is surprising that your client's two experts have not produced any pictures of the site entrance, which is so clearly visible from directly opposite it in the Park, nor have they even identified its location on the photos they have produced. They have not shown any of the closer views looking out of the Park towards the gates, the road and Heater Plantation nor any view back towards the Hall. Ditchingham Church is not identified on any of the photos, nor is the location of Fen Lane. Both are important landscape location features.

I now enclose a CD with the photos taken by us which have been marked up with basic

information which we consider to be relevant to the assessment of the historic landscape in the context of the quarry application. It may be, for example, that the precise extent of the line designating the site is a matter for discussion but that can be readily adjusted by agreement and reference between experts. The point is that we have not sought to include subjective comments on the pictures designed to bolster our case. The fact that your client's expert has sought to do so only shows how desperate he is to try to minimise the undoubted adverse impact the quarry would have upon this historic landscape.

It is our opinion that whilst the joined up pictures your client's expert has produced are interesting to see, the digital images on CD provide a far better medium through which to record the views from the Hall and its Park since they allow the viewer to zoom in and see precisely how visible, or not, is the site, its perimeter hedgerow and its woodland plantations in the context of the designed historic landscape. I have sent copies of the CD with a copy of this letter to those noted below and suggest that we endeavour to agree the text and precise positions of the features marked. I look forward to hearing from you or Philip Parker on this.

I note from your letter that your client is no longer proceeding with the preparation of its historic landscape assessment at the present time. Perhaps you would care to explain the reasons for this decision which runs contrary to what your client has previously told NCC and English Heritage. Is it perhaps because Lafarge is simply unable to find a historical landscape expert who is prepared to confirm that there will be no adverse impact on the historic landscape? Alternatively if Lafarge has now decided to abandon altogether its previously recorded intention to re-submit the application for this site then perhaps you would care to let us know.

In any event we shall be taking the matter forward with both English Heritage and the Georgian Group as well as the Garden History Society the Norfolk Gardens Trust and the landscape officers for NCC and SNDC so as to ensure that they fully appreciate the true scope of the quarry proposal and of the threat it represents to this historic landscape.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Chadd

cc Stuart Anderson Lafarge Aggregates Ltd
David Eve English Heritage
Linden Groves Garden History Society
Richard Carden SNDC
John Smith Ditchingham Parish Council
James Dawson The Georgian Group

Robert Tamworth Ditchingham Estate
Alan Burrell NCC
Robert Cranthorne NCC
Professor Tom Williamson UEA
Chris Tyacke Hedenham Parish Meeting
Judith Cantell NCC Landscape