

Planning / Mineral Development Statement

Extension to existing Research and Development Facility

**J C Bamford Excavators Ltd, Wardlow / Wredon
Quarry**

March 2021

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Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Site and Planning History	3
3	The Proposed Development	4
4	Planning Policy Context	5
	National Planning Policy Framework	5
	The Development Plan	6
	Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy 2014-2026	7
	Staffordshire County Council Minerals Local Plan	10
5	Planning Considerations	10
	Principle of Development	10
	Character and Appearance of the Area	12
	Other Material Considerations	12
6	Conclusions to the Planning Statement	13
7	Mineral Development Statement	14

1 Introduction

- 1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.
- 1.2 The author of this appraisal, Jim Malkin, has worked as a principal planning officer in development control in local government, and more recently as a planning consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and experience of the appeals process. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 1.3 This statement forms part of detailed planning application in relation to the extension of the existing workshop to support the operations of JCB Research and Development at Wredon Quarry, Rue Hill, Cauldon Low.

2 Site and Planning History

- 2.1 Wredon and Wardlow Quarries have been working quarries for the extraction of carboniferous limestone since the 1940s. Planning permission SM.09/14/113 M is the extant permission for the whole site and consolidates six previous permissions. This planning permission allows for two operational strategies. One strategy allows the quarry to operate to a limited extent whereby quarrying activities can take place within the quarries, but with limited stone exportation (less than 1000 tonnes in a 12-month period). This strategy is referred to as the 'interim strategy'. The second strategy allows for the full permitted scheme of mineral extraction (any operations resulting in the export of mineral from the Site of 1000 tonnes or more in a 12-month period) and is referred to as the 'working strategy'.
- 2.2 JCB purchased the sites from Lafarge Tarmac in December 2013, although Tarmac

have retained rights under the agreement. It is the intention to continue to use the sites for low-key quarrying and related operations under the Interim Strategy, principally to operate monitor and demonstrate the performance of machinery within the quarry environment in a controlled manner. The quarry is currently operating under this 'interim strategy'.

- 2.3 The JCB operations maintain the integrity and security of the site and creates employment for over 50 people, on sites that would otherwise be left dormant, and supports the research and development of a major international manufacturing company based in Staffordshire, employing approximately 6,000 in the UK, and 11,000 worldwide.
- 2.4 JCB sit at the forefront of construction machinery innovation and are the first large scale manufacturer to develop a range of electric machines. In order to stay at the forefront of future technologies it is necessary to expand the R&D facility at the Quarry. It is crucial to JCB's ongoing success that they are able to continue to develop machines and test them to 'breaking point'. Without the expansion of the workshop, alongside other developments (tilt table, loading tower etc...) this thorough and robust development and testing regime will not be able to be undertaken or will have to be undertaken at rented test sites at significant cost to the company. The proposed works result in circa £1.4m pounds worth of investment in the site.
- 2.5 There are currently a number of buildings on the site including offices and workshop alongside a VVIP building which allows customers and delegates a view over the quarry bowl and associated test facilities.

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 As set out above JCB are currently seeking to expand their existing R&D workshop by

adding an extension of approximately 610m² of floorspace to include a mezzanine floor.

- 3.2 The extension of the facility will significantly increase the workshop capacity at the site allowing additional technologies to be tested prior to release into the marketplace, as well as providing a safe and secure working environment for JCB personnel.
- 3.3 JCB are currently in the process of providing new testing facilities in the quarry bowl including a tilt table and loading tower and these have recently been granted permission under planning reference SM.20/06/113 M.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 Paragraph 11 advises that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan; and also in circumstances where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
- 4.2 One of the core principles of the NPPF is the economic objective *‘to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure’*.

4.3 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states *'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential'*.

4.4 Whilst Paragraph 83 seeks to support a prosperous rural economy and states the following:

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

The Development Plan

4.5 The adopted development plan relevant to the proposal comprises of the policies contained within the following document:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy 2014-2026

- Staffordshire County Council Minerals Local Plan 2015-2030

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy 2014-2026

SS1 - Development Principles

The Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- *a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities*
- *quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;*
- *easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;*
- *increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;*
- *a healthy, safe, attractive and well-maintained environment;*
- *development which maintains the distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;*
- *development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations.*
- *development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.*

All proposals for development will be considered in the context of the District-wide Spatial Strategy and with regard to both its direct and indirect cumulative impact

over the longer term. New development will make the best use of previously developed land and buildings and will follow a sequential approach to the sustainable location of development.

SS1a - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

SS6c – Other Rural Areas Strategy

The other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development and infill boundaries of the towns and villages, as defined in the Site

Allocations DPD, including those small settlements and dispersed developments not identified in Policies SS5, SS6a and SS6b.

These areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

2. Sustain the rural economy by:

- Enabling the limited expansion or redevelopment of an existing authorised business for employment uses;*
- Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises (in accordance with policy R1);*
- Supporting the development of appropriate ICT and new means of communications to enable homeworking and small businesses reliant one-technology;*

E1 - New Employment Development

New employment development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports and improves the local economy in terms of providing for the needs and skills of the existing and future local resident workforce and meeting identified business needs, having regard to the Area Strategies in SS5 and SS6.

In addition:

The sustainable redevelopment, intensification or improvement of existing employment sites for new business and industrial developments will be supported

provided it would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities, character or appearance of the area and is in compliance with other policies in the Core Strategy.

Staffordshire County Council Minerals Local Plan

- 4.6 The Staffordshire County Council Minerals Local Plan 2015-2030 (SCCMLP) adopted in February 2017. The following policies are considered relevant:

Policy 4 Minimising the impact of mineral developments states:

“...4.3 Having assessed the impacts of the proposals for mineral development and the mitigation and/ or compensatory measures, permission will only be granted where it has been demonstrated that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on human health, general amenity and the natural and historic environment, or the material planning benefits of the proposals outweigh the material planning objections.”

This document refers to the Wardlow and Wredon sites as follows: “JCB has taken a long-term interest in the complex of quarries known as Wardlow/ Wredon and Kevin to assist them with the development of new vehicles. As a result, it is anticipated that the permitted minerals will remain as a long-term reserve. In the event that the quarries are re-activated then we will also encourage Tarmac, who have retained an option to work the minerals, to consider the benefits of co-ordinated working and restoration here.”

5 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The scheme supports the operations of JCB’s Research and Development facilities at the quarry, and will ensure that the site has modern and up to date workshop facilities which will maintain the companies position at the forefront of technological

advances in construction machinery. The company employ approximately 11,000 people worldwide and the research and development arm of the company is key to its future success and to enable it to maintain its position at the front of construction and agricultural machinery technology.

- 5.2 The application site is located outside of any designated development boundary however policies SS6c and E1 support the *‘expansion or redevelopment of an existing authorised business for employment uses’* which is the case with this proposal.
- 5.3 In addition to the support found within the development plan the National Planning Policy Framework in Paragraph 83 supports *‘the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas’* to bolster the rural economy. It is clear, therefore, that the Government accepts this type of development can be appropriate in the countryside.
- 5.4 In accordance Paragraph 80 of the NPPF the benefits to the rural economy associated with the proposals, including boosting job opportunities, should be given significant weight in the overall planning balance. Paragraph 80 advises that *‘significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development’*.
- 5.5 The proposed development will enable the research and development arm of the company to improve its facilities to ensure it remains at the top of the competitive manufacturing machinery market. The operations of JCB at Wardlow/Wredon Quarry maintain the integrity and security of the site and create employment for over 50 people on site and supports the operations of a major international manufacturing company based in Staffordshire, employing approximately 6,000 in the UK, and 11,000 worldwide. The proposal assists in the continuation of interim operations at the Quarry and therefore allows for positive economic impacts to arise from

associated employment and its effects in the local area. The scheme will constitute an investment of circa £1.4m into the site.

- 5.6 As such, the new proposals constitute a sustainable form of economic development and accord with Paragraphs 80 and 83 of the NPPF.

Character and Appearance of the Area

- 5.7 The proposed workshop extension provides for 3 additional bays onto the existing facility and will measure 19.2m x 31.5m with a pitched roof with a ridge height of 10.7m to match the building which it is attached too.
- 5.8 The extension will be constructed of a steel frame with matching Moorland Green cladding as utilised on the majority of JCB buildings. The extension is located to the southern elevation of the building on the existing yard, which will be extended southwards. The design of the extension provides for a modern industrial response and exhibits a functional design to match into the existing built form which it is proposed to extend.
- 5.9 The site is set back from A52 and is located to the rear of the existing building and therefore views will be limited solely to people visiting the site. The proposed building will not appear unduly prominent on the site and will not result in any wider landscape harm.
- 5.10 The scheme therefore in visual terms is acceptable and complies with relevant local and national planning policies.

Other Material Considerations

- 5.11 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that development proposals should only be refused where the impacts of the development are severe. The development will not result in a material increase in the number of vehicle movements to and from the site on a daily basis and will therefore not impact on highway safety.
- 5.12 Whilst it is anticipated that a small number of jobs will be created by the development these are likely to be based across both the Wredon Quarry site and other local manufacturing bases. There is unlikely to be a material increase in staff permanently based at the Quarry. The existing parking requirements associated with the use will therefore remain unchanged.
- 5.13 The proposals therefore safeguard the safe and efficient use of highway network.
- 5.14 The site is not located in any designated flood zone and therefore is not at risk from fluvial flooding. The proposals are distant from any residential receptors and will therefore not result in any harm to amenities.
- 5.15 The application is accompanied by a preliminary ecological survey completed by Wardell Armstrong. This concludes that the workshop extension will not result in any harm to protected species or their habitats.
- 5.16 The proposal is sufficiently distant from nearby heritage assets to ensure that there will be no harm to their significance.

6 Conclusions to the Planning Statement

- 6.1 The application proposes a small extension to the existing R&D workshop operated by JCB Excavators Ltd. The expansion of these facilities is key to the ongoing success of this international business which is a major employer in the local area.

- 6.2 Paragraphs 80 and 83 of the NPPF 'support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas. It is therefore clear that the Government accepts that such development can be appropriate in the countryside.
- 6.3 The proposals will have a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the area owing to the natural screening and the extensions location next to existing built form. The scheme complies with the approved interim strategy and will not neutralise existing mineral assets as it is located outside of any area of existing quarrying.
- 6.4 There are no other material considerations that preclude the granting of planning permission for the proposed development.
- 6.5 The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development which accords with the relevant policies of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, Staffordshire County Council Minerals Local Plan and those contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

7 Mineral Development Statement

7.1 The applicant's business:

- 7.1.1 JCB are one of the largest producers of construction machinery in the world, they use the site for low-key quarrying and other related operations, under the Interim Strategy. JCB use the site as part of their Research and Development operations.

7.2 Background to the development proposals:

- 7.2.1 JCB are seeking to extend their existing R&D workshop at the site to enable the expansion of these facilities at the quarry site. It is crucial to JCB's ongoing success that they are able to continue to develop machines to stay at the forefront of

manufacturing machinery technology. Without the facilities proposed as part of this application, it is likely the companies R&D will fall behind that of its main competitors, and will result in the company having to utilise rented test sites at significant cost.

7.3 The alternatives that were considered:

- 7.3.1 The company considered alternative options at other sites they own across the country, however owing to the existing Research and Development operations at Wardlow/Wredon Quarry complex it makes logistical and operational sense for the development to be completed on the site to rationalise this arm of the company's operations on a single site. JCB have already gained planning permission for the formation of a tilt table and loading tower in the quarry bowl and this is the next phase of the R&D expansion.

7.4 The significance of the timing of the application (if any):

- 7.4.1 The timing of the application is dictated by the requirements of the company.

7.5 The intended commencement date and phasing of the development:

- 7.5.1 It is intended that the workshop extension will be commenced immediately upon the grant of planning permission, subject to company requirements.

7.6 The contribution that the development would make to the business:

- 7.6.1 The scheme proposes the increase in workshop space linked to the R&D operations of JCB. This will enable the company to test new technologies in construction and agricultural machinery enabling the company to maintain its position at the forefront of technological advances in this sector. The company employ approximately 11,000 people worldwide and the research and development arm of the company is key to

its future success and to enable it to maintain its position at the forefront of construction and agricultural machinery technology.

- 7.6.2 The proposed developments will enable the research and development arm of the company to continue develop new machines which will enable the company to remain at the top of the competitive manufacturing machinery market. The operations of JCB at Wardlow/Wredon Quarry complex maintain the integrity and security of the site and create employment for over 30 people, and support the research and development of a major international manufacturing company based in Staffordshire, employing approximately 6,000 in the UK, and 11,000 worldwide. The proposal assists in the continuation of interim operations at the quarry, and therefore allows for positive economic impacts to arise from associated employment and its effects in the local area.

7.7 The contribution that the development would make to the local economy e.g. new jobs, security for existing jobs, business rates, and investment and spending in the local economy (unless provided separately – see ‘E’ for Economic Statement);

- 7.7.1 The developments will create employment for additional 5 people on site and supports the research and development of a major international manufacturing company based in Staffordshire, employing approximately 6,000 in the UK, and 11,000 worldwide. The proposal assists in the continuation of interim operations at the Quarry and therefore allows for positive economic impacts to arise from associated employment and its effects in the local area.

7.8 The applicant’s interest in the land and mineral, including any adjoining or nearby land and minerals:

- 7.8.1 The application site forms part of the companies use of Wredon, Wardlow and Kevin Quarries in the local area.

7.9 The pre-application discussions and changes to the proposal that resulted from those discussions:

7.9.1 The scheme is minor in nature and therefore pre-application discussions were considered unnecessary in this instance.

7.10 The design / operational considerations to achieve and maintain high environmental standards (e.g. environmental management systems operated by the applicant);

7.10.1 The developments will be completed to the highest environmental standards and will comply with the companies adopted policies.

7.10.2 During the completion of the development considerate construction techniques will be met to ensure the proposal does not result in any impacts outside of the site. Construction times will be kept to 07:00am to 18:30pm during the week and 07:30am until the 15:00pm on Saturday with no working on Sundays. Noise, Vibration and Dust will be controlled where necessary to ensure that appropriate working solutions are undertaken as necessary.

7.11 An explanation of the traffic movements if they will vary by day / week / month / season (unless provided separately – see ‘T’ for Transport, Access, Parking and Travel Plan Considerations);

7.11.1 The development will not increase any operational movements associated with the Quarry. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that development proposals should only be refused where the impacts of the development are severe, and this will certainly not be the case in this instance.

7.12 The effects of climate change

7.12.1 No implications, the proposal will however enable the company to test machines that utilise environmentally friendly power sources i.e. electric, which will enable such machinery come to market quicker improving the environmental impacts of the construction industry.

7.13 The environmental systems operated by the client:

7.13.1 The scheme will comply with all existing systems operated on the site and will comply with the ecological and environmental conditions required as part of the operations under the Interim Strategy (administered by Wardell Armstrong).

7.14 The results of mineral exploration to prove the extent and quality of the mineral resource and information about quality and quantity of the remaining mineral reserve where applicable;

7.14.1 Not applicable

7.15 the nature and significance of any ancillary operations e.g. processing and blending of the mineral to add value and marketability;

7.15.1 The scheme will not impact on the existing minerals; the quarry will continue to be operated in accordance with the approved interim strategy. The scheme will not result in the neutralisation of mineral deposits as it is located away from the quarry bowl. If large scale quarrying were to be undertaken from the site in the future the workshop building, including the extension could be re-purposed to support these operations.

7.16 the safeguards to guarantee that the land is restored at the earliest opportunity to achieve high environmental standards e.g. to address the need for a restoration guarantee bond;

7.16.1 The development would not impact on the approved Interim Strategy for Wardlow/Wredon Quarry Complex.

7.17 The intended after-use of the land and how that use would be sustained beyond the statutory 5 year aftercare period;

7.17.1 The development would not impact on the approved Interim Strategy for Wardlow/Wredon Quarry Complex.

7.18 Planning obligations that the applicant is willing to enter into either as unilateral undertakings or as part of a Section 106 Legal Agreement e.g. to agree to: consolidate the permissions; arrange liaison committee meetings; comply with traffic routes; extend the aftercare period; secure a restoration guarantee bond; or transfer the land at the end of a specified period.**

7.18.1 Not applicable