

**MARTELLS PIT, ARDLEIGH
PLANNING BRIEF**

CONSULTATION DRAFT



MARTELLS PIT, ARDLEIGH - BRIEF

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MPA Martells Pit Planning Brief - Sketch Proposals.

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MARTELLS PIT, ARDLEIGH

PLANNING BRIEF

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Martells Pit lies five miles north-east of Colchester and one mile south of Ardleigh Village. It straddles Slough Lane, a County Road which runs from Ardleigh to Crockleford. The total area is 96.9 acres (39.2 ha).
- 1.2 Apart from a small area in the east, near Martell's Hall, the whole pit area north-west of Slough Lane is worked out, having been in operation since 1948. The area to which the Brief relates forms the western part of this area, and extends to 26.6 acres (10.8ha), (plan MPA). Of this total the larger western part, 17.7 acres (7.2ha) is partly occupied by a number of industrial concerns; it comprises Phase I in the Brief. The smaller eastern part is largely occupied by processing plant which serves the still active workings to the south and east of Slough Lane. It has an area of 8.9 acres (3.6ha) and comprises Phase II in the Brief. A further area of worked out land to the east, also north of Slough Lane, is occupied by a large pond used for angling and a low-lying marshy area formerly also a pond.
- 1.3 In May 1982 the County Council informed Tendring District Council that it considered there is scope for limited industrial development of an appropriate type at Martells Pit. This Brief has been prepared in response to the agreement in principle to such development, and seeks to ensure satisfactory siting, access, landscaping etc.

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROVISIONS

- 2.1 Martells Pit is allocated for mineral extraction in the approved Review Development Plan, and lies within a Rural Area in that Plan, which until the formal adoption of the Tendring Rural Areas Local Plan acts as guidance for development control in the area.
- 2.2 The Brief has been prepared in response to the need for early restoration of the exhausted workings north and west of Slough Lane. Some restoration to recreational use has already taken place to the east, but the opportunities for further similar uses here are limited.
- 2.3 The industrial uses which have evolved in recent years within the area of Phase I meet a need for appropriate sites for concerns in some way related to the extraction of sand and gravel. Sites are also required for "untidy" industrial uses, or activities unsuited to conventional industrial estates.
- 2.4 Policy S10 in the approved County Structure Plan states that "Permission will not normally be given for development in the Rural Areas unless the proposals are related to agriculture, mineral extraction or forestry, or are for other forms of development which must take place in the Rural Areas". Some of the industrial uses within Phase I at present are related to mineral extraction. The inclusion of other "untidy" industrial uses within the Brief area would be justified on the grounds that they comprise other forms of development which must take place in the Rural Areas since they cannot be accommodated satisfactorily elsewhere. Martells Pit is particularly suitable in this respect since it is one of the least environmentally sensitive parts of the Rural Areas in the locality.
- 2.5 In the County Structure Plan Alteration submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment in July 1987 there are minor alterations to Settlement Policy S.10, but the sense of the policy remains basically the same, and similar considerations still apply.

- 2.6 Policy E4 in the approved Structure Plan states that "in Rural Settlements outwith the Green Belt, industrial and commercial activities not detrimental to local amenity and character, including the expansion of existing firms, may be permitted, provided they are of a scale and nature appropriate to the locality..... Industrial or commercial development will not normally be permitted elsewhere in the Rural Areas". Although the site lies outside any rural settlement its development can again be justified on the basis that the type of development proposed cannot be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere, and the Pit is of minimal environmental sensitivity.
- 2.7 Policy E4 has also been amended in the County Structure Plan Alteration, but the basic sense of it is still similar to the Approved Plan in that industrial and commercial development will not normally be permitted in the open countryside outside rural settlements. Again however similar mitigating circumstances also apply in this case.
- 2.8 In many respects the Tendring Rural Areas Local Plan also supports a level of industrial development in Rural Areas. Policy 15 states that "small-scale industrial development appropriate to a rural location and not detrimental to amenity or character may be approved in villages possessing sites suitable in environmental and highway safety terms....". Policy 16 states that the "development proposals involving extensions to existing industrial premises will be judged on their merits. The District Planning Authority will normally consider such proposals favourably subject to no existing problems and no additional environmental or traffic problems being created".
- 2.9 Policy 25 in the Rural Areas Local Plan states that the District Planning Authority will urge Essex County Council to enforce the restoration of exhausted mineral excavations. Normally agricultural restoration would be expected, but constructive proposals such as for recreation or nature conservation uses will be welcomed. In the case of Martell's Pit industrial and commercial uses are acceptable to the District Council, and indeed Tendring Officers have been actively involved in the preparation of this draft Brief.

2.10 The District Council are concerned at the high level of unemployment in Rural Areas generally. More specifically Part 2 of the Rural Areas Local Plan states that "the amount of existing employment in Ardleigh Village should be continued at its present level. However, further employment growth can be expected to the south of the village at Martell's Pit, where exhausted mineral workings are to be used for new industrial development".

3. INTERIM EMPLOYMENT POLICY

3.1 As it stands, Policy E4, like Policy S10, militates against industrial development outside settlements in the Rural Areas, and Martells Pit falls within such a definition. However in March 1982 County Planning Committee adopted an "Interim Employment Policy" which varied a number of Structure Plan policies in the interests of economic revitalisation. One variation, relating to policies S10 and E4, is as follows:

"Some industrial and commercial users are by their nature untidy, unneighbourly, and have a low worker:site ratio, e.g. commercial vehicle repairs, haulage depots, agricultural machinery and plant hire, and block-making concerns etc. Such businesses are frequently less than welcome by the freeholders of industrial estates, indeed many such concerns are sited in non-confirming locations within or adjoining residential areas. It is considered that rural area policy might usefully be relaxed to allow such development to be located within areas of derelict or despoiled land, e.g. disused railway land or former mineral workings, where restoration cannot be secured by the planning authority. Three provisos need to be added; first that the development does not detract from the appearance of the countryside; secondly that land of high ecological value is safeguarded; and finally that the adjoining road network is adequate to serve the likely traffic generated by the development".

3.2 These three provisos need to be examined more closely in relation to the possible development of Martells Pit for industrial development of this type.

1) The appearance of the Countryside

It has already been stated that the Pit lies within a locality which is environmentally less sensitive than most. The valley of the Salary Book immediately to the north-west is within a Special Landscape Area, but the rest of the surrounding area comprises fairly non-descript, level land. Much of the area covered by the Brief is below the level of the adjoining countryside, and screening with existing vegetation and with planting proposed in the Brief should soften the visual impact of development.

ii) Land of high ecological value

The area covered by the Brief is not of ecological interest. The valley of Salary Brook, though not within a Nature Conservation Zone, is of some ecological value; this should not be prejudiced by the development of the site.

iii) Traffic generation

The road network in the vicinity of Martells Pit is not capable of accommodating a substantial increase in commercial traffic. The Colchester Eastern By-pass passes close by, but there is no direct access from Slough Lane. Any additional commercial traffic would therefore need to use the local road network through Ardleigh, Dedham or north east Colchester before reaching the primary network. There are four factors likely to mitigate the impact of traffic on the surrounding minor road network.

- a) Some 6.8 acres (2.76 ha) of the total 26.6 acres (10.8ha), or over 25%, is already in industrial use and should not generate further traffic increases on any scale.
- b) The 8.9 acres (3.6ha) in Phase II cannot be developed until after the pit area south east of Slough Lane is exhausted and the plant removed. These preconditions will result in a substantial decrease in sand and gravel traffic which should in fact more than offset increases in industrial traffic.
- c) A permission granted in November 1982 for an asphalt plant on the north-western boundary (TEN 872/82, Area 5 on Plan) will not now be implemented. This permission allowed for up to 50 vehicle movements a day, a scale unlikely to be matched by low density industrial development envisaged in the Brief. The owners of the site are prepared to agree to the formal revocation of this permission without compensation.
- d) The likely traffic generation implications of applications for industrial development within the Brief area can and will be carefully examined before permission is granted, and conditions can and will be imposed to minimise movements if necessary.

3.3 Bearing these factors in mind it is considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by industrial development should not put an additional strain on the local road network.

3.4 The three provisos relating to protection of the countryside, land of high ecological value and traffic generation therefore appear to be satisfied with the development of Martell Pit for untidy and unneighbourly industrial uses, in accordance with the 1982 Interim Employment Policy.

4. THE PROPOSALS

4.1 The proposals relating to the types of industrial and commercial uses to be accommodated phasing road pattern and circulation and planting and landscaping are set out in the following sections, and they are outlined on the Plan.

5. TYPES OF INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL USE

5.1 Those industrial and commercial uses which are essentially:

- a) related to mineral extraction,
or are:
- b) by their nature untidy or unneighbourly,

are particularly suited to location within the Brief Area.

5.2 Care has to be taken that too great a proportion of light industrial or warehouse uses is not allowed to build up at the site; this would create an additional need to identify new sites for mineral-related and untidy industries elsewhere. However there are already some light industrial uses on the site and the present mix of uses has proved to work well. Consequently a proportion of light industry and warehousing will be allowed.

5.3 **PROPOSAL MP 1**

No more than 50% of the space available for industrial and commercial development within the Brief area at any time should be devoted to light industrial and warehousing uses (Classes B1 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987).

6. PHASING

6.1 It is proposed that the development of the area should take place in two phases.

6.2 Phase I comprises the larger western area, and extends to 17.7 acres (7.2 ha). There are at present five industrial concerns here, with a total area of 7.0 acres (2.83 ha). (A-E on the Plan and in Appendix A).

6.3 **PROPOSAL MP 2**

It is proposed that a further 6.85 acres (2.77 ha) within Phase I should be developed in five sections (1-5 on the Plan and in Appendix A).

6.4 The five new sections within Phase I need not be developed consecutively because it will depend on user requirements as to which sites will be utilised first. However, care will need to be taken to ensure that the road system is extended to accommodate each new section before it is occupied.

6.5 **PROPOSAL MP 3**

No new premises will be occupied until the road system has been extended sufficiently to allow safe and adequate passing, turning and manoeuvring of vehicles.

6.6 Phase II comprises the smaller eastern area which extends to 8.9 acres (3.6 ha.).

7. ROAD PATTERN AND CIRCULATION

7.1 The main vehicular access onto Slough Lane

The entrance road at its junction with Slough Lane has recently been improved to comply with a previous planning permission on the site in accordance with the County Surveyor's requirements.

7.2 The Internal Roadway

The internal roadway itself will not be constructed to a standard required for Local Authority adoption. It will be provided to accommodate the unique requirements of the site to a specification suitable for the type and volume of traffic likely to be generated by progressive development.

The roadway will generally be 5 metres wide and provided with one 1 metre wide pedestrian margin. Prior to the development of Section 3 of Phase I a spur and a suitable turning area will be provided. Suitable site splays at junctions and forward visibility on inside bends will be provided as necessary.

Before the development of Phase II begins the roadway will be extended from Phase I to form a circular route from the site entrance. It may be prudent to then make the whole of the roadway one-way.

8. PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING

8.1 There is a certain amount of vegetation, largely scrub, covering parts of the site. This needs to be supplemented with additional planting, in particular on the boundaries of the site.

8.2 PROPOSAL MP 4

Planting and landscaping within and adjoining the site, particularly where there are vegetation gaps on the boundaries, will be carried out within two years of Local Authorities' adoption of this brief in accordance with a scheme of landscaping which shall previously have been agreed with the County Planner.

8.3 The principal features of such a landscaping scheme have in fact been agreed between the County Planner and the developers, and are outlined in the Plan.

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PLANNING BRIEF

APPENDIX A

PHASE 1

<u>Existing Industrial Uses</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>ha</u>
A. Petrabloc Co. Ltd. Patent Concrete Blocks	2.82	1.14
B. Douglas Curtis Machine Tool Reconditioning	0.78	0.32
C. J.A.C. Strutton & Son Cement & Sand Roofing & Paving Tiles	2.12	0.86
D. Ardleigh Swift Limited Irrigation Equipment & Plant	1.08	0.44
E. D.B. Concrete Small Scale Ready Mix Concrete	<u>0.25</u>	<u>0.10</u>
	7.05	2.86
<u>Proposed Industrial Areas</u>		
1.	0.77	0.31
2.	0.61	0.25
3.	4.25	1.71
4.	1.05	0.42
5.	<u>1.00</u>	<u>0.40</u>
	7.68	3.09
Existing & Proposed Industrial Areas	<u>14.73</u>	<u>5.95</u>
Unleased areas to be Landscaped	2.97	1.20
Total Area, Phase 1	<u>17.70</u>	<u>7.15</u>

DCPDMARTELLS(8)

Sewage Treatment Plant Site.

Coppice existing hedge & plant up gaps with Hawthorn & Field maple:

New screen planting along top of slope with Italian alder, Sweet chestnut, Rowan & Goat willow.

Provide trickle irrigation.

Plant up gaps with Hawthorn Blackthorn & Field maple.

Plant up hedge bank & sloping ground to east with 7 m. wide belt of Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Rowan, Goat willow & Field maple at 2 m. centres.

Plant up gaps along hedge bank with Hawthorn, Blackthorn & Field maple.

Underplant existing Maples with Italian alder, Sweet chestnut, Rowan, Goat willow at 2 m. centres.
Erect new fence.

Continue existing management of hedge.

Plant new hedge along fence line with Hawthorn & Blackthorn.

C

B

D

4

2

Phase I

Phase II

A

E

1

Pond

Petrol Interceptor Tank

Fishing Lake

Ardleigh

Slough Lane

- Boundary of Pit.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Phase Boundaries.
- Phase I:
- Existing Industrial Uses.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Proposed Industrial Areas.
- Existing Buildings & Plant.
- Permissions for new Buildings & Plant.
- Existing Roads.
- Proposed Roads.
- Planting & Hedgerows.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

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