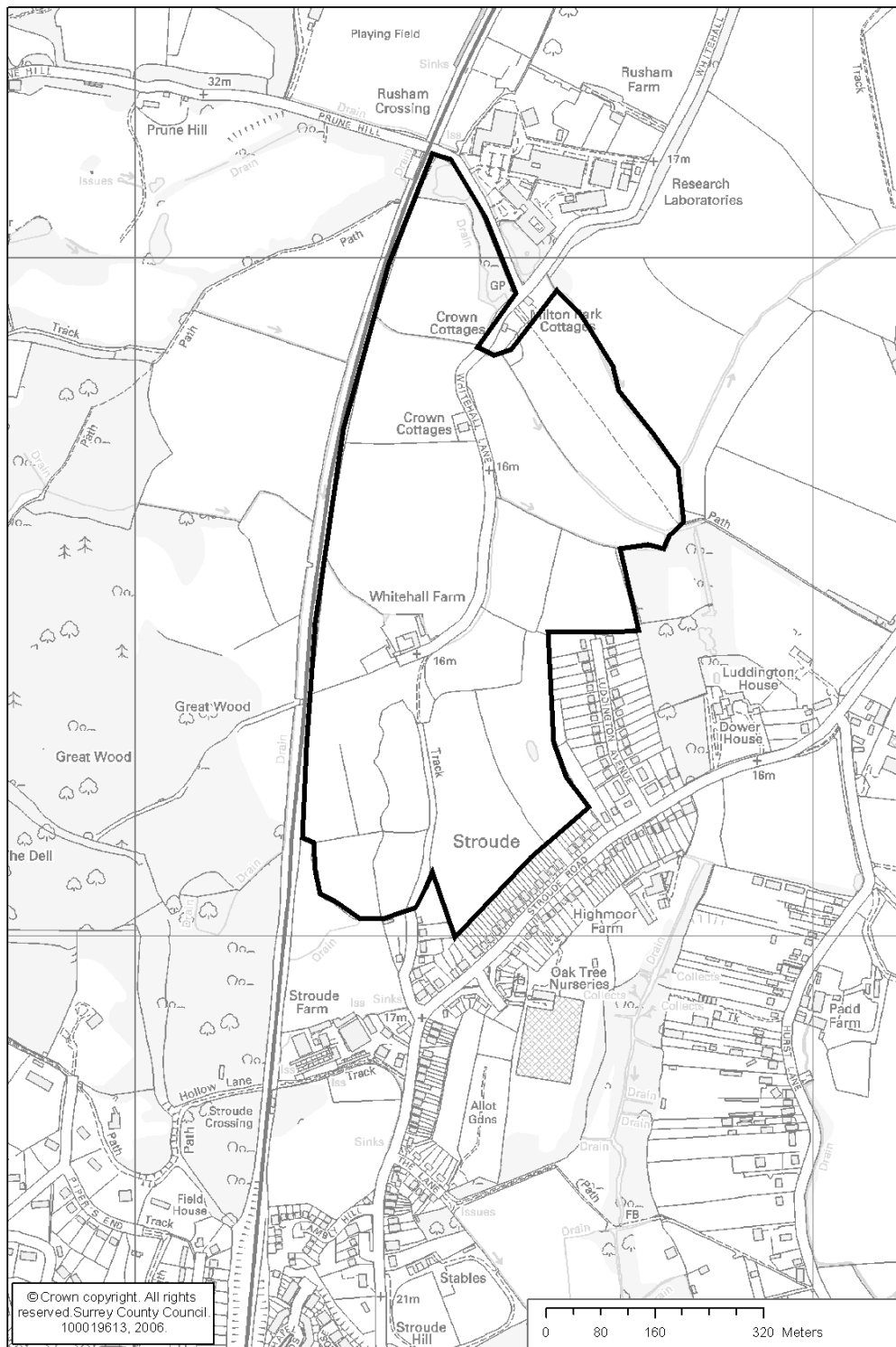


Preferred area E: Whitehall Farm, Egham



(Runnymede 500506E 169535N)

Location

The land lies south of Egham, north of Stroude village, and immediately to the east of the Egham to Virginia Water railway line. The land lies within a significant gravel deposit, with preferred area D - Milton Park Farm, to the north-east.

Description

The site consists of a large area of farmland which is used mainly for grazing of cattle and horses. A derelict farmhouse, Whitehall Farm, lies at its centre which is accessed via Whitehall Lane. The lane runs southwards from Prune Hill through the middle of the site and also serves a number of cottages. A public footpath runs through the site in a northerly direction from Stroude village, linking the farmhouse with another footpath which continues westwards under the railway line. Residential properties are located along the southern (Stroude Road) and eastern (Luddington Avenue) boundaries.

Estimated yield:	1.40 million tonnes of concreting aggregate
Area:	41ha
Planning designations	Green Belt Site of Nature Conservation Importance

This preferred area was included as a Category 1 site in the *Surrey Minerals Local Plan 1993*, but no application came forward.

Planning applications to work this preferred area should address:

Access

The land does not adjoin a main road and no suitable direct access can be achieved, therefore access would have to be via preferred area D – Milton Park Farm. It may be possible to secure a separate access to the Stroude Road to the east if additional land were secured. Proposals for an access at this point should address the potential impacts on the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Traffic, transportation and cumulative impact

Given the proximity of preferred area D - Milton Park Farm, there are concerns about the cumulative impact of traffic on the local road network. The land should not be worked simultaneously with Milton Park Farm.

There are a number of level crossings in the vicinity of Whitehall Farm, which if used by mineral traffic would cause delay and disruption to local traffic. Proposals to work this preferred area would require mineral lorries to be routed to avoid these crossings by accessing and egressing the site via Stroude Road and onto the primary route network via New Wickham Lane, Thorpe Lea Road and the Thorpe bypass.

Processing

Residential properties lie along the eastern and southern boundaries and therefore it will be difficult to find a suitable on-site location for a processing plant. Preference will be given to processing material off-site at preferred area D - Milton Park Farm.

Local amenity, phasing, railway and rights of way

Unworked margins and further screening should be provided adjacent to Stroude Road and Luddington Avenue. Applications should assess the potential environmental impact of noise, dust, visual impact and traffic on adjoining properties. Unworked margins may also need to be left alongside the railway to the west, and the impact of working on the railway line should be considered. Working should be phased so as to minimise the impact on nearby properties. Whitehall Lane then continues northwards linking up to Prune Hill. Suitable diversion routes for these paths should be found.

Hydrology

The land is within a major aquifer and a source protection zone 3 for a public water supply at Chertsey, and there are abstraction licences within 0.5 km. Rusham Stream crosses the land and there are several other small surface water features. The water table is high and liable to localised flooding. Planning applications should include a hydrological risk assessment of the short- and long-term impacts of working and restoration. This should include an assessment of the impacts on local properties and trees from dewatering, impacts on local aquifers, and the impacts on local water flow by the removal of gravel. In addition proposals to restore the site with fill would be likely to require unworked channels of gravel to facilitate groundwater flow, with filling in a cellular manner around them.

Ecology

The land is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, and contains small hedged fields, shaw belts, and areas of wet woodland. The high water table means that it is also likely to contain damp grassland communities. Stag beetle are thought to be present on the site and are a species of principle importance. A study of the ecology and biodiversity of the site should be carried out as part of any planning application to assess the impact of any working and restoration schemes.

Aircraft

The site lies within 13km of Heathrow Airport. Planning applications should take into account the potential hazard to aircraft from birds attracted by the development during the operational and restoration stages of mineral working.

Listed buildings and parks and gardens

The site lies approximately 0.5km from Great Fosters hotel, a grade I listed building. The hotel gardens are also grade II on the register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Proposals should assess the impact of working and restoration on the character and setting of the building and its gardens. Luddington House and Lodge adjoin the boundary and Milton Park and its South Lodge are in close proximity, and all are grade II listed buildings. Applications should assess the impact of working on their character and setting.

Archaeology

The preferred area is within an area of high archaeological importance, and prior archaeological assessment, and if necessary evaluation, would be required as part of any proposal.

Landscape

This is an attractive area of open farmland forming part of the Thames floodplain. It possibly contains landscape remnants of Windsor Great Park. Applications need to identify important landscape characteristics and features that should be conserved during working or restored as part of the restoration scheme (for example surviving features of a wider historic parkland).

Restoration

Restoration should contribute to meeting informal recreational, landscape and nature conservation objectives. Restoration should involve inert fill to create a landscape of open grazed parkland and areas of wet woodland, with public access.

Restoration options are covered in more detail in the *Mineral Sites Restoration SPD*.