

## STRATEGIC STONE STUDY - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Strategic Stone Study was set up in response to the Symonds Report ([Planning for the Supply of Natural Building and Roofing Stone in England and Wales](#)) commissioned by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government [CLG]) and published in 2004. The report examined the issues affecting supply and demand of indigenous building stone in the UK, and focussed in particular on the problems of sourcing appropriate stone to repair historic buildings.

The report recommended that

- Mineral Planning Authorities should identify and protect 'heritage quarries'; and
- a national database of building and roofing stones be established.

In response to the recommendations of the Symonds Report, CLG published [Minerals Policy Statement 1 \(MPS1\)](#), which provides guidance for Mineral Planning Authorities and others. Annex 3, Natural Building and Roofing Stone, recommends that:

*English Heritage and the industry are encouraged to make Mineral Planning Authorities aware of important sources of building and roofing stone that they consider should be safeguarded from other forms of development...*

The Strategic Stone Study identifies potential stone resources for conservation purposes, and provides evidence of their importance. This helps Mineral Planning Authorities to identify quarries, mines and mineral workings, whether disused or active, of importance to the built heritage, which they consider should be safeguarded from sterilisation by non-mineral development through designation as Mineral Safeguarding Areas in Local Development Documents. This will encourage Local Planning Authorities to recognise existing and potential quarry sites and to include suitable policies within their development plans so that the needs of building conservation can be considered equally alongside other competing uses or designations.



## The Study

English Heritage, working with the British Geological Survey and local geologists and historic buildings experts in the main stone-producing counties in England, has selected a range of culturally significant stone-built buildings and villages, collated a catalogue of the rich variety of building stones used, and identified their historic sources. The British Geological Survey was commissioned to expand its database of quarries, mines and other mineral workings in the UK to accommodate the data on English building stone resources and the stone-built heritage through a freely-available unique database called English Building Stone Pits (EBSPits).

Data available in EBSPits includes:

- Descriptions of the building stones used in historic stone-built structures, ranging from castles and cathedrals to vernacular houses, industrial and farm buildings, bridges, walling and even pavements and kerbs, in 35 English counties;
- Representative buildings, structures and villages in these counties, constructed in whole or in part of stone, including those built of local stone, which are typical of the area, as well as those that employed stone imported from outside the locality, which have historical or architectural significance; and
- The location of each known historic and active building stone quarry and mine, derived from a wide range of digital resources, including historic Ordnance Survey maps and British Geological Survey archives.



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## Benefits of the Strategic Stone Study

The data collected provides:

- An indication of the distribution of and relationship between stone-built structures and the former or currently-worked sources of such stones.
- Information on the past use of individual stones for particular purposes, such as ashlar, rubble, roofing, paving or decorative work.
- A robust evidence base to enable Mineral Planners' to identify and investigate potential heritage building stone sources that should be safeguarded
- An opportunity to promote the use of indigenous stones for new-build and conservation projects by identifying potential sources of local stones that are no longer worked, thus facilitating consideration of their future exploitation
- Information regarding the significance of building stones used historically that can be used to support planning applications and appeals in respect of opening new quarries or re-opening dormant ones

Despite the considerable amount of data amassed, the Strategic Stone Study does not override or replace professional advice from experts in the fields of geology and stone conservation, when undertaking specific projects. Rather, it is a resource to help such professionals. Building stone should not be selected for use in a conservation or new building project based on data provided by EBSPits alone.

English Heritage would like to thank the following people:

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