



East Tamaki quarry staff with the Cat D11

Stevenson quarry 'a company jewel'

PRIVATELY owned Auckland contracting company W Stevenson & Sons has celebrated its 80th birthday by winning the Nissan Diesel quarrying award for what the company describes as "an environmental success story" at its East Tamaki Quarry.

The award, a \$5000 environmental study trip overseas, was announced at the recent Aggregate & Quarry Association annual conference and will be taken up by Michael Buckland who, as company engineer, had a large input into the East Tamaki project in recent years.

The quarry has been one of the jewels of the company. Like many quarries in the Auckland region, it is now nearing the end of its working life.

But, says Stevensons, what differentiates East Tamaki from so many others is that it has been rehabilitated and is being used today by the community.

"There is no scar on the landscape or dangerous hole left in the ground for all to argue about over the years to come. What has been left are highly prized commercial properties that have been carefully engineered by Stevenson's own construction department.

"The rehabilitation and development of the quarry has happened in close association with the council and local businesses.

"Here at Stevensons, we believe we have created the best form of advertising that the quarry industry can ever have: by successfully working in close proximity to

people and businesses and by leaving the land in usable form."

Sir Barry Curtis, Mayor of Manukau, says Stevensons has established and implemented programmes of environmental importance not only to its own operations but to the aggregate and quarry industry overall.

He says the company has impressed Manukau City Council in a number of areas which impact on the city environment and he has been very pleased with the responsible attitude that Stevensons has adopted over the years.

The visual treatment of East Tamaki Quarry, including the use of natural features, has lessened the visual impact on neighbouring uses, he says. Likewise, the use of a large tracked machine to rip rock has reduced the need to blast to a low level, and dust nuisance has been eased with the purchase of purpose-built water carts.

"I am pleased to have this opportunity to commend Stevensons on the manner in which they consult with council and local businesses, and thank them for the tremendous effort they have made in developing difficult land for use by industry," Sir Barry says.

"The sensitive approach shown by the company is both innovative and original, and exceeds the standard requirements of the council."

Stevensons has been involved with quarrying for more than 70 years. It has

Stevenson's jewel

owned some of East Tamaki Quarry since the early 1950s — the adjoining properties were being quarried by others during this time.

The surrounding quarries changed ownership several times with Stevensons finally taking responsibility for rehabilitating what was becoming a major environmental problem.

The company had been involved in several other quarries in Auckland, one of the most notable being Mt Smart which was rehabilitated into the No 2 athletics track area.

Stevensons believes East Tamaki Quarry was the first and possibly still the only large-scale redevelopment/rehabilitation for commercial purposes of quarry workings in New Zealand.

"East Tamaki Quarry has required engineering of the highest calibre and specialist compaction techniques and testing to ensure the integrity of the fill placed in the deep cuttings," the company says.

This remarkable rehabilitation story began when Stevensons realised that to create a worthwhile commercial park it needed to attract quality high-profile companies to the area. So it decided to lead by

example and move all its head office and workshop operations from Otahuhu.

Award-winning architects and engineers were engaged to design both buildings to the highest standard. These buildings were completed in 1986.

Since that time Stevensons has created a park round its head office for the use of its staff and the enjoyment of all those who work in the area. The company employs a fulltime gardener who recently received an award on behalf of Stevensons for the best presented commercial property in Manukau city.

Environmental improvements associated with the rehabilitation process have included:

- Screening the quarry by working behind a man-made ridge. The ridge will be the last area to be developed within the quarry, thereby mitigating the visual effects till the last possible moment.

- Making a commitment that all mobile plant will be well maintained, especially the noise-suppression components of the plant. The majority of blasting, when required, is carried out at set times during the day and mostly after working hours to limit the noise impact on nearby work-

ers.

- Containing all quarry water, including rainfall, on site by always working to a low central point. The water thereby discharges to ground, negating any contamination of waterways and harbours. This "stored" or "recycled" water is used for all dust suppression on the property.

- Monitoring all blasts and ensuring they are kept well below the allowable levels detailed by the standard. Blasting used to take place twice a day but three years ago a Cat D11 was purchased to rip the rock instead. Only the hardest cap rock is now blasted, a reduction of 80%.

- Utilising the mostly unsuitable materials left by the previous owners of the quarry for backfilling operations. This has reduced the importation of clean fill, thereby reducing the impact of truck traffic on the surrounding businesses.

- Reducing dangerous workings. The quarry used to operate over a wide area with several faces used for rock extraction. This was obviously difficult to fence adequately from the public. So now only one face is worked, with the area being immediately backfilled or at least made safe once the rock has been extracted. The introduction of signage has also helped create awareness of safe practices for staff, customers and neighbours.