



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-501187-GY-26

Development

Retention and continuation of quarrying activities and associated works.

Location

Ballydonnellan, Headford, Co. Galway.

Planning Authority

Galway County Council.

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

2660157.

Applicant(s)

Michael Maloney.

Type of Application

Retention.

Planning Authority Decision

Refuse Retention.

Type of Appeal

First Party Normal Planning Appeal.

Appellant(s)

Michael Maloney.

Observer(s)

None.

Date of Site Inspection

10th June 2026

Inspector

C. Daly.

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site, of area 4.5ha., consists of a limestone quarry in operation where areas of the site have been excavated of limestone rock mainly in the north / east area of the site with the mid area towards the north-east having been excavated to a significant depth and extent. The land otherwise rises towards the rear (north) and sides (east and west) of the site although this appears to be related to the placing of aggregate in some areas.
- 1.2. There are areas of Priority Annex I limestone habitats at the site entrance and in the north-west / west area of the site and adjacent to it outside the site. This area within the site is covered by aggregate. There are a number of open shed type structures in the north-west area of the site where stone cutting type work takes place. The site entrance to the south winds up towards the western boundary to a parking area mid-way up the site and a prefab structure and gate to the quarry area.
- 1.3. The site boundaries consist of part dry-stone walls on the eastern and western boundaries with the northern boundary including hedgerows and such walls and the southern boundary consisting of fencing. The underlying bedrock is Burren Formation, a pale grey clean skeletal limestone and there is karstified limestone bedrock at the surface with no soil coverage.
- 1.4. The quarry is not visible from the entrance or driveway which is lined by high walls. The site entrance is from the N84 national road. The surrounding rural area consists of agricultural lands, mainly grass fields and there is some woodland directly adjacent to the north-east, north, south-east, south and part of the west. There are overhead electricity wires which pass over the site entrance area. The site is c.6.5km south-east of Headford and is c.13.5km north of the urban edge of Galway city.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development, in summary, consists of the following:
 - Retention and continuation of quarrying activities for 7 years within the application area of 4.5ha for the extraction by mechanical means only (wire and chain saws) of dimension stone that includes:

- Extractions within an area of 2.4ha (current quarry extraction area (2025)).
The future quarry extraction area of 1.3ha within this area will be c.3m to 4m in depth. No further extraction is proposed outside of this area to the south-east.
- Processing and storage of quarried material.
- Provision of a wheel wash.
- Provision of a hardstand area and hydrocarbon interceptor.
- Ancillary site works.

2.2. In relation to EIA, the application includes Schedule 7A information in the submitted EIA Screening Report.

2.3. The application includes a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment screening report.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Galway County Council decided to refuse permission for two reasons which related to:

- (1) The failure to demonstrate sight lines from the entrance in accordance with TII standards and DM Standard 28 of the CDP, the sub-optimal vertical and horizontal alignment between reverse road curvature in both directions, the substandard visibility pertaining to generated turning movements that would arise, in contravention of national policy and Development Plan objectives NR1 and NR4. This would negatively impact on the public road and would render the road network unsuitable to create frequent generated exit and entry turning movements with a high-speed route while increasing the likelihood of road traffic conflicts. The proposed development would interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic on the public road and would endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard and obstruction of road users.
- (2) Having regard to the groundwater vulnerability, the lack of mitigation measures for groundwater protection, the planning history, it cannot be determined that significant impacts on habitats within the Natura 2000 sites (Lough Corrib SAC) can be ruled out. The AA Screening Report has omitted assessment of the

existing priority Annex I limestone pavement habitat. The proposed development would materially contravene Policy Objective MEQ 2 Protection of the Environment, Policy Objective NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species, Policy Objective NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment, Policy Objective WR 1 Water Resources, and DM Standard 50 Environmental Assessments of the Development Plan.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

- 3.2.1. The Planner's Report assessment noted active enforcement proceedings in relation to the site. In relation to Appropriate Assessment, it did not accept the screening out of impacts on the Lough Corrib SAC. It did not accept the rationale in relation to measures to prevent hydrocarbons entering groundwater and the purported low risk in relation to same. The P.A. also noted that there is a priority Annex I Limestone Pavement habitat on the site and that clarity is required in relation to same.
- 3.2.2. The P.A. considered there to be a lack of mitigation measures proposed for groundwater protection in the area such that it could not determine that significant impacts on the Lough Corrib SAC could be ruled out. It considered that if permission had been sought prior to the commencement of quarrying on the site that an Appropriate Assessment would likely have been required. In this circumstance, it noted that per Section 34(12)(b) of the 2000 Act that the P.A. is required to refuse to consider the application.
- 3.2.3. In relation to EIA, it noted that a sub-threshold screening is required, and it noted the submission of an EIA Screening Report with Schedule 7 and 7A information. It noted that there is no real likelihood of any significant effects on the environment arising. It noted the limestone quarry operations on the site with no blasting. It considered the quarry land use acceptable at the location having regard to national and local policy.
- 3.2.4. In relation to archaeology, it noted a slight overlap with the zone of influence of SMR GA02379 to the west and other national monuments to the west. It noted the location within a Class 1 Low Landscape Sensitivity area and the screening from the N84 by hedgerow and trees and noted no significant visual impact on the landscape from the N84. The P.A. noted that the Transport section reviewed the TIA, RSA and

recommended the entrance be refused in relation to road safety concerns noting TII concerns.

3.2.5. It noted the closest dwelling is c.350m to the south-west across the N84 and had no concerns in relation to impacts on residential amenity. It noted the submitted report in relation to noise, air quality, hydrogeology and quarry operations. It noted the submitted restoration plan for the site. The Planner's Report concluded by recommending refusal for the two reasons outlined above.

3.2.6. Other Technical Reports

- Environment Section: F.I. required in relation to impacts from the proposed development on the Annex I habitat that is adjacent to the site and which has not been referenced.
- Roads and Transportation Section: Refusal recommended in relation to inadequate sightlines and policy for national roads.
- Tuam Area Office: No response received.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII): Noted that the proposal is contrary to national policy as it would adversely affect the operation and safety of the national road network for 5 stated reasons.
- The Heritage Council: Noted a Priority Annex I Limestone Pavement habitat on the site "*with the most important parcel overlapping with the development boundary on the western section of the site*". It recommended that an assessment of the development impacts on the habitat be provided including the entire site area and for any habitats immediately adjacent.
- Fáilte Ireland: No response.
- An Taisce: No response.
- Development Applications Unit: No response.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None.

4.0 Planning History

96/1382: Permission refused by the P.A. to John Malony to erect a serviced farm house in relation to endangerment of public safety by reason of a traffic hazard due to the location on a national secondary route where the maximum speed limit applies.

99/1888: Application by Martin Cosgrove to build a dwelling withdrawn.

99/2309: Permission refused by the P.A. for a dwelling house (applicant John Joe Maloney). Two reasons for refusal related to (1) Endangerment of public safety by reason of a traffic hazard. (2) Contravention of policy which limits development along the road to essential housing needs.

25/60714: Permission refused by the P.A. for continuation of quarrying activities for the extraction of dimension stone that includes within an area of 2.4 hectares; Processing and Storage of quarried material; wheel wash; hardstand area and hydrocarbon interceptor; all ancillary siteworks; for a period of 7 years and all within an application area of 4.5 Ha. Two reasons for refusal related to (1) Inadequate sightlines and contrary to policy for national roads; and (2) Could not rule out adverse effects on the Lough Corrib SAC in contravention of policy.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (the CDP)

The area in which the site is located is classified as a Class 1 Low Landscape Sensitivity in the Central Galway Complex. Class 1 area are considered to be unlikely to be adversely affected by change.

Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development

Section 4.14 Mineral Extraction and Quarries

Policy Objective MEQ 1 Aggregate Resources

Ensure adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet future growth needs within County Galway and the wider region and to facilitate the exploitation of such resources where there is a proven need and market opportunity for such minerals or

aggregates, and ensure that this exploitation of resources does not adversely affect the environment or adjoining existing land uses.

Policy Objective MEQ 2 Protection of the Environment

This lists the requirements in relation to the management of authorised aggregate extraction.

Policy Objective MEQ 4 Landscaping Plans

Ensure that all extractions shall be subjected to landscaping requirements and that worked out quarries should be rehabilitated to a use agreed with the Planning Authority which could include recreational, biodiversity, amenity or other end-of-life uses. The use of these rehabilitated sites shall be limited to inert waste and sites shall be authorised under the appropriate waste regulations.

Chapter 6

Policy Objective NR 1 Protection of Strategic Roads

To protect the strategic transport function of national roads and associated national road junctions, including motorways through the implementation of the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' DECLG, (2012) and the Trans European Networks (TEN-T) Regulations.

Policy Objective NR 3 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit (RSA)

Require all applications for significant development proposals which have the potential to impact on the National Road Network to be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit (RSA), carried out by suitably competent persons, in accordance with the TII's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines and TII Publications (Standard) GE-STY-01024 (Road Safety Audit) respectively.

Policy Objective NR 4 New Accesses Directly on National Roads

The policy objective of the Planning Authority will be to avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60 kmh

apply. This provision, in accordance with the relevant TII Guidelines, applies to all categories of development'. Consideration will be given, where appropriate, for the facilitation of regionally strategic projects and utility infrastructure.

Chapter 10 Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure

Policy NHB 1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species

Protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU Legislation and National Legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts) and extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may occur during the lifetime of this plan.

Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI 94 of 1999).

Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ ecological network.

Policy NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment

To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.

Policy NHB 4 Ecological Appraisal of Biodiversity

Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites. Where appropriate require an ecological appraisal, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.

Policy WR 1 Water Resources

Protect the water resources in the plan area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the River Basin District Management Plan 2018 – 2021 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same) and also have regard to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans.

Chapter 15 – Development Management Standards

DM Standard 28 outlines sight distances required for access onto national, regional, local and private roads. Per Table 15.3 where the design speed is 100kph, the distance required is 215m.

DM Standard 33a a) Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), Road Safety Audit (RSA) & Road Safety Impact Assessments (RSIA)

Require all planning applications for significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA, RSA and RSIA to be carried out by a suitably competent consultant, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network...

DM Standard 50 Environmental Assessments

This requires the application of Appropriate Assessment, Ecological Assessment and Environmental Impact Statement/Assessment in respect of designated environmental sites.

5.2. Other Relevant National or Regional Policy / Ministerial Guidelines

- **DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January,2012). Section 2.5 of the Guidelines**
- **TII Publications DN-GEO-03060 Geometric Design of Junctions (priority junctions, direct accesses, roundabouts, grade separated and compact grade separated junctions), May 2023, Section 5.6.2.2 Direct Access, tables 5.4 and 5.5.**
- **TII Publications DN-GEO-03031 Rural Road Link Design, May 2023– Section 2 Sight Distance, Figure 2.1.**
- **Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government**

The economic importance of quarries together with the demand for aggregates for construction is noted particularly in relation to infrastructure including house building. It notes that aggregates are site specific as they can only be worked where they occur.

It notes that regard should be had to the remaining mineral resources, their extent and the amount of capital investment in infrastructure and equipment, when considering whether a further permission should be granted (Section 4.9).

In relation to noise, the guidelines include recommended standards for daytime (55dB(A) LAeq (1h)) and night-time (45 dBA LAeq (1h)) in relation to the nearest sensitive noise receptor. It notes that short-term high noise limits can be applied for temporary activities which will result in considerable environmental benefit (Section 3.2).

Best practice measures for dust prevention are included in Section 3.3 including water spraying of conveyors, wheel washing and landscaped

mounds on the site periphery. In Section 3.4 it notes that where there is a proposal to excavate below the water table that hydrogeological studies are required to determine the likely effect on groundwater flows in the area, particularly in relation to wells on adjoining lands. It notes mitigation measures including the bunding of fuel tanks, the use of oil interceptors and appropriate drainage systems to minimise surface water run-off into the quarry workings.

In relation to valuable habitats, it notes that these should be preserved, that ground stability may need to be assessed and that ecologists should be involved in recommending appropriate mitigation measures (Section 3.5).

- **Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry, Environmental Protection Agency, 2006**

These EPA guidelines provide a summary of environmental management practices for quarries and they address environmental management issues such as air, vibration and noise issues.

- **Water Action Plan 2024, A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland**

Per the requirements of the Water Framework Directive this seeks to accelerate the implementation of measures to restore and protect all water bodies. Up to date data on the status of local rivers, lakes and waterbodies is available at the catchments.ie website.

- **National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030**

Section 59B(1) of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 (as amended) requires the Commission, as a public body, to have regard to the objectives and targets of the NBAP in the performance of its functions, to the extent that they may affect or relate to the functions of the Commission.

Under Outcome 2A it is outlined that the NPWS will complete the selection and notification of sites for the protection of Annex habitats and species listed on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Target 3 (see Appendix 1) outlines that “the selection and notification of sites for the protection of Annex habitats and species listed on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives will be completed”.

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

In relation to designated sites, the subject site is located:

- c.0.65km north of Lough Corrib SAC (site code 000297).
- c.0.85km north of Lough Corrib SPA and PNHA (site codes 004042 and 000297).
- c.1.2km south-east of Turloughcor PNHA (site code 001788).
- c.3.9km south-west of Turlough Monaghan PNHA (site code 001322).
- c.5.8km south of Lough Hacket PNHA (site code 001294).
- c.7.5km south-east of Rostaff Turlough PNHA (site code 000385).
- c.7.6km south-west of Knockmaa Hill PNHA (site code 001288).

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The grounds of the first party appeal on behalf of the applicant can be summarised as follows:

Refusal Reason No. 1

- The refusal reason does not reflect the application documentation.
- The entrance and access were constructed as part of the N84 realignment works and the application is for the continued use in connection with the established quarry.
- No material increase in traffic is proposed beyond that associated with the ongoing operation of the site.
- This is a retention and continuation of works application.
- The submitted Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) concluded that the development would continue to operate at very low traffic volumes in the context of the national route, there would be negligible impact on traffic conditions and on the capacity of the surrounding road network.

- Sightline distances of 215m were shown in Appendix 3 of the TTA in accordance with TII standards contrary to the P.A. assertion.
- The application included a forward visibility / stopping sight distance drawing showing 215m stopping sight distance for a right-turning vehicle at the access contrary to the P.A. assertion.
- The policy refusal in relation to access from a national route fails to acknowledge that this is a long-established quarry access serving a resource tied use rather than a new sporadic access and in the context of this and the limited traffic volumes, it is reasonable to grant permission.
- The type of development is not ribbon or sporadic development at which the 2012 Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines are targeted.
- In addition, a commitment has been made to maintain the verge and hedgerow vegetation to ensure visibility standards are preserved on an ongoing basis.
- The application should not be assessed as a wholly new intensification unsupported by technical assessment.
- All the recommendations from the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) were accepted.
- The first refusal reason overstates the position in relation to sight distances and does not adequately distinguish between a policy objection in principle and an alleged absence of technical evidence.

Refusal Reason No. 2

- The second refusal reason does not distinguish between two separate issues, namely the effect on Natura 2000 sites and whether priority Annex I limestone pavement is present within or adjacent to the site and how it should be managed.
- The application included a Hydrogeological Addendum and updated AA Screening which was based on borehole investigation, logger data, direct hydrogeological site investigation, review of groundwater conditions and long-term raw-water monitoring data from Luimnagh Water Treatment Plant and it

concluded there was no measurable quarry related effect on the receiving waters of the Lough Corrib.

- The hydrogeological report found no evidence to conclude that the project would likely give rise to significant effects on the Lough Corrib SAC and this was based on direct evidence as to whether any effect had in fact arisen from the existing development.
- The habitats mapping submitted described the current observed habitats on site at the time of survey and the F.I. issue of the Heritage Council and Environment section was one of further habitat characterisation, quantification and management, rather than a complete absence of ecological consideration and the appeal (Appendix B) now addresses this directly.
- The issue of the Annex I habitats overlap is not simply equivalent to the active extraction area but includes lands associated with disturbance, stock piling and ancillary activity, which require separate ecological treatment and management.
- The works to the existing access arrangement by the Council as part of the N84 works included a section traversing the area identified as limestone pavement.
- The occurrence of limestone pavement outside of the Lough Corrib SAC does not establish likely significant effects on the Lough Corrib SAC.
- The appeal is accompanied by updated mapping and a Draft Limestone Pavement Management Plan.
- The P.A. conclusion under Section 34(12)(b) of the 2000 Act in relation to the prior carrying out of development without planning permission does not follow from the evidence available to the P.A..
- The threshold in relation to AA is not met based on dissatisfaction with evidence submitted or because ecological clarification is sought in relation to a non-designated habitat.
- Refusal reason no. 2 should not be upheld.

- The refusal should be set aside having regard to the modest scale of the operation, the absence of blasting, the technical environmental material submitted, the updated ecological clarification provided and the economic and resource value of the stone resource.

Appendix B – Limestone Pavement Figure and Draft Management Plan

- Historically recorded limestone pavement survey information identifies parcels of pavement within the wider site context, including an area toward the western side of the application lands.
- As a result of disturbance there is a distinction between the recorded extent of limestone pavement and the current surface habitat condition observed on site.
- The appeal map includes the habitat area present on the ground at the time of survey.
- Within the western area of the site, the portion of historically recorded limestone pavement overlain by quarry-related material is limited at c.3,000sqm.
- Parts of the historically recorded pavement have been disturbed or covered by soil, stone, overburden or stockpiled material.
- The overlap does not correspond with the active extraction footprint, it corresponds with lands use or capable of use for ancillary or disturbed ground purposes.
- The current site condition in the overlap areas is not pristine limestone pavement habitat but a modified or disturbed surface condition.
- The draft management plan approach includes:
 - Avoiding any unnecessary further disturbance of areas corresponding to historically recorded limestone pavement.
 - Identify and protect any remaining exposed or semi-intact limestone pavement features within or immediately adjoining the application lands.

- Manage stockpiling, storage and ancillary activity to avoid further encroachment into such areas.
- Assess disturbed areas with a view to ecological improvement where feasible.
- Ensure any future treatment of such areas is informed by ecological input.
- The plan also includes more specific measures in relation to the above including:
 - Removal / redistribution of overlying material where agreed with a project ecologist and where practical.
 - Any future site management plan should include reference to the limestone pavement areas to avoid unnecessary disturbance.
 - Review the areas periodically by an ecologist to ensure adequate protection.
- The historically recorded pavement areas can be distinguished from the principal extraction footprint and the appropriate response is one of protection, operational control and site specific ecological management.
- The issues raised in the appeal can be addressed by appropriate planning control.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

None.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the reports of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal to be considered are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Road Safety
- Ecology

- Environment
- Cultural Heritage and the Landscape

7.2. Principle of Development

- 7.2.1. I note that the quarry use for retention and proposed is for the extraction of dimension stone over an area of 2.4ha. within the site as well as for the processing and storage of quarried material within the wider site. The application details notes that the quarry produces c.20,000 tonnes of limestone annually. It is expected that c.130,000 tonnes will be worked over a 7 year period. I note that dimension stone is mainly used for architectural and building stone purposes. I note CDP policy which supports quarries as a significant economic and construction resource as well as in relation to rural employment.
- 7.2.2. The Planner's Report noted that the quarry provides employment for 8 people, that no blasting occurs and that a restoration plan is proposed for the site. It considered the development to be acceptable in strategic land use terms. I note that of the c.50% of the extracted rock which is noted to be unsuitable for dimension stone / building stone, that this is stockpiled temporarily and then removed from the site to be used as aggregate or fill.
- 7.2.3. I note that the quarry supplies regionally significant premium dimension stone. It is noted to be above the Burren formation which per the submitted Planning Report is noted to be *"one of the few Irish limestones capable of yielding premium-grade dimension stone for conservation and high-spec architectural use"*. It notes that such quarries avoid the need to import comparable stone. I note that the stone is cut on the site with diamond wire and chain saws and that no blasting occurs. The Planning Report notes that future working would be restricted to above 11m AOD. I note also that it is outlined that no real alternatives exist to the current land-based sources of aggregates. I note there are no policies or objectives in the CDP that preclude or restrict quarrying type activities at this location.
- 7.2.4. Noting the above, the need to extract and refine the stone on the site and CDP policy in support of such economic activity, I consider the principle of the land use for the purposes of quarrying dimension stone, and related activities, to be acceptable subject to an assessment of the environmental effects of the development.

7.3. Road Safety

7.3.1. I note the appeal against refusal reason no. 1 of the P.A. in relation to the access and road safety issues. I note that the access is directly from the N84 national secondary road where the maximum 100kph speed limit applies. I note that the applicant submitted a Traffic and Transport Assessment prepared by PMCE Consultants. I note that the appeal asserts that the entrance should not be assessed as a wholly new intensification. However, I note the application is for retention of the existing quarry as part of the proposed development and that no permission is in place for a quarry on the site. I note this while noting that the submitted aerial imagery suggest that quarry activity has taken place on the site since at least 2005. I therefore consider that no permission is in place for the entrance associated with the quarry operations and this is required to be assessed as a new entrance. I note there is a history of permission being refused on the basis of road safety at this location.

Road Safety

- 7.3.2. I note that refusal reason no. 1 referred to the absence of demonstrated compliant sight distances. I note that DM Standard 28 and Table 15.3 of the CDP require sightlines of 215m. I note that the TTA states that visibility in both directions meets and exceeds the requirements of the CDP and of TII publication DN-GEO-03060. It also noted that forward visibility on the N84 towards vehicles turning into the quarry can also be achieved. For the continued operation of sightlines, it noted a requirement for regular verge maintenance.
- 7.3.3. The Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) as part of the TTA noted that there is currently no ghost island right turn lane on the N84 at the access. It noted a requirement for signage to indicate the oncoming entrance, a requirement for pavement repair at the entrance and measures to cut back vegetation for sightlines. It recommended that an assessment be undertaken to determine if a ghost island should be required. I note that Appendix E of the TTA shows an adequate sightline to the south-west from the entrance but for the sightline to the north-east that vegetation would be required to be cut back diagonally opposite the entrance to the east.
- 7.3.4. However, I note that the applicant does not have control of this area and cannot ensure this takes place. I also note that there is no provision for a ghost island for right turning vehicles which is effectively recommended in the RSA. Accordingly, I do

not consider that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that the required sightlines for the site entrance would be available. I note that the P.A. refusal reason noted that the inadequate sight distances would be contrary to Objectives NR 1 and NR 4 of the CDP although I concur with the appellant that these objectives are not directly related to sightlines. I consider that the inadequate sight lines would result in a traffic hazard which is contrary to DM Standard 28 and that this would endanger public safety and that permission should be refused accordingly.

Policy

- 7.3.5. I note that Objectives NR 1 and NR 4 relate to the protection of strategically important national roads and new entrances on national routes. I note that a survey of vehicle turnings was undertaken on Wednesday 10th September 2025. I note that the submitted TTA includes a link capacity analysis and it determined that the N84 would continue to operate within capacity for each assessment year, 2025, 2030 and 2040. I therefore note no significant issues would arise in relation to capacity.
- 7.3.6. I note the submission from TII which outlined that the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* 2012 guidelines indicate that new entrances and traffic on to national roads should be avoided. It considered that this would result in the intensification of an existing direct access to a national road contrary to policy, that it would result in a traffic hazard and obstruction of road users and would create an adverse impact on a national road.
- 7.3.7. I note that the appeal notes that the 2012 guidelines relate to ribbon or sporadic development and not such a quarry development. However, having reviewed Section 2.5 of these guidelines, I note that they apply to all categories of development. I note that Objective NR 4 of the CDP also includes a similar policy to avoid the creation of new entrances on to national routes which explicitly applies to all categories of development. Noting this, I consider that the retention permission for the existing development is effectively associated with permission for a new entrance for a quarry.
- 7.3.8. While I note the TTA showed no significant increase in trip numbers would be generated by the proposed development and no capacity issues in relation to the entrance, I consider that Objectives NR 1 and NR 4 are clear in relation to the protection of national roads and in this regard, I consider that the effective creation of

a new quarry entrance by the development is contrary to these objectives and merits a refusal of permission. I also consider that a refusal of permission is merited in relation to the road safety issues outlined above.

7.4. Ecology

- 7.4.1. Potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites are addressed in the AA Screening section 9.0 of this report. In relation to Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, I note that connections to the Lough Corrib pNHA and the Turloughcor pNHA were examined in the Hydrological Addendum report. This noted a likelihood that groundwater discharges towards the Lough Turloughcor would be low. It also noted that the underlying aquifer is classified as being extremely vulnerable.
- 7.4.2. Quarrying is proposed to remain above the water table which would remove any further dewatering. This would reduce the potential for drawdown effects associated with the quarry. It also notes that in the absence of blasting, that nitrogen residues are not a plausible pathway for nutrient enrichment pressures. Noting this and the significant separation distances from such sites, I therefore do not consider that any significant effects would result on Natural Heritage Areas or Proposed Natural Heritage Areas as a result of the proposed development.
- 7.4.3. The applicant's Planning Report notes in relation to habitats that the quarrying area is largely without vegetation as it mainly comprises exposed vertical faces of limestone rock. No additional habitat loss is expected as a result of the proposed development. I note that the absence of vegetation on the site is as a result of the quarrying activity and that no information has been submitted on pre-quarrying habitats or vegetation. The report notes the potential for indirect effects associated with dust and noise but notes that standard mitigation measures and controls can be employed.
- 7.4.4. In relation to water-based impacts associated with the groundwater beneath the site, it is noted that the groundwater in the quarry contributes to Lough Corrib but that per the raw water data for the previous ten years, no deterioration was found and that this was during a period associated with quarry deepening and dewatering. It also noted that this, together with existing water control measures on the site, would ensure no significant impacts on sensitive receptors in the area.

- 7.4.5. Based on this and on the remainder of my report in relation to impacts from dust, noise and water, I am satisfied that this would be the case, should permission be granted.
- 7.4.6. I note that the appellant has raised the issue that the second refusal reason does not distinguish between potential effects on Natura 2000 sites and the management of Priority Annex I limestone pavement habitat. I note refusal reason no. 2 partly relates to the potential impact on Natura 2000 sites. I have dealt with AA related issues separately in Section 9.0 below and in Appendix 3. Based on my AA Screening, I note no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the SAC or other Natura 2000 sites would arise and I consider that this element of refusal no. 2 has not been sustained.
- 7.4.7. In relation to the separate issue of effects or potential effects on the Priority Annex I limestone pavement habitat on and adjacent to the site, I note the submitted Limestone pavement Figure and Draft Management Plan submitted (Appendix B) with the appeal. I note the submissions of the Environment Section which requested further information in relation to Priority Annex I limestone pavement habitat where it overlaps the site and the submission of the Heritage Council which recommended that an assessment of the development impacts on the habitat be provided.
- 7.4.8. I note that the Existing Site Layout map submitted with the appeal shows the Priority Annex I limestone pavement areas being at and beside the site entrance, being beside the site to the north-east and being on part of the west / north-west end of the site and being adjacent to this area. It notes an area of c.3,000sqm within the western site area which has been covered by quarry related material although it is not clear if this area has been disturbed.
- 7.4.9. I note that the appeal notes that *“parts of the historically recorded pavement have been disturbed or covered by soil, stone, overburden or stockpiled material”*. It also notes that the area of site overlap with the protected limestone habitat does not coincide with an active extraction area. Rather it overlaps with lands for ancillary and disturbed ground purposes.
- 7.4.10. I note from my site visit that what I observed on the site in relation to protected limestone habitat areas is consistent with the appeal’s description of *“these areas [being]... not pristine limestone pavement habitat, but a modified and disturbed*

surface condition". This is the case at the site entrance which is paved over and to the west / north-west, I observed the aggregate piled up with a constructed track up to the raised area which I observed to have been disturbed above ground level.

7.4.11. I note that the management plan submitted for the Priority Annex I limestone pavement areas includes objectives:

- To avoid any unnecessary further disturbance of areas corresponding to historically recorded limestone pavement,
- To identify and protect any remaining exposed or semi-intact limestone pavement features within or immediately adjoining the site,
- To manage stockpiling, storage and ancillary activity so as to avoid further encroachment into such areas,
- To assess disturbed areas with a view to ecological improvement where feasible,
- To ensure that any future treatment of such areas is informed by ecological input, and
- To provide a framework for monitoring and review during the life of the permission.

7.4.12. I note that the above measures are not specific and they rely on further review, assessment and design. I note that the applicant is relying on historic survey data (NPWS 2013). There has been no site specific surveys undertaken that would accurately identify the location and extent of the habitat on the site. Rather, I note this is proposed to be undertaken post decision. Based on the information submitted I cannot clearly identify if disturbance has taken place or if potential disturbance that would arise from additional development.

7.4.13. Future treatment would be reliant on ecological input and I note that suggestions about removing and redistributing overlying material are vague. I note that the monitoring and review measures appear aspirational. Therefore, I cannot determine what effects arose and what permission would be granted for. Based on the above, I do not consider that the management plan would be practically enforceable.

- 7.4.14. The plan includes further measures such as site demarcation and restriction on further encroachment. I note that this is also an application for retention of the existing quarrying undertaken on the site. I note that no ecological assessment or detailed, up to date survey of the extent of limestone pavement on the site has been submitted in relation to the priority habitat.
- 7.4.15. I note that the disturbance outlined relates to the surface level of the habitat. However, I note the entrance traverses the habitat and no specific information is provided in relation to how this area was affected such that I consider it possible that more than the surface level of the habitat was disturbed. I have noted the absence of pre-development site surveys in relation to the habitat on the site. I am therefore concerned that there is an absence of information on the file to demonstrate that the development has not and would not fail to protect the habitat, either at the site entrance or at the area to the west / north-west end of the site.
- 7.4.16. I note an absence of information on the file in relation to existing impacts and how these would credibly be remediated. This is also the case for the proposed development not yet undertaken. I am therefore not satisfied that the measures outlined would appropriately and adequately protect the priority habitat on the site. I consider that not being able to rule out a significant impact on the Priority Annex I habitat is significant and this would not accord with the NBAP and with Policy NHB 1 (Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species) and DM Standard 50 (Environmental Assessments) of the CDP.
- 7.4.17. I therefore concur with the P.A. reason no. 2 for refusal where it states that this would materially contravene Policy NHB 1 (Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species) and DM Standard 50 and I recommend permission be refused in relation to the impact on the Priority Annex I habitat. I do not concur with the P.A. where it states that there would be material contraventions of Policy Objectives NHB 2 (European sites and Appropriate Assessment) and Policy Objective WR 1 (Water Resources) as the habitat concerned is not related to these matters and noting my AA Screening.

7.5. Environment

Material Assets, Land and Soil

- 7.5.1. In relation to land and soil, the submitted Planning Report notes that there is little or no soil coverage on the site. It notes that historically the minerals and subsoils present were removed during initial quarrying. It notes that the underlying bedrock of the site is Burren Formation and that the site has karstified limestone bedrock at the surface. It notes that all extraction, processing and site activities would occur above 11.00mOD.
- 7.5.2. It outlines the site activities which mainly include stone cutting, excavating with a tracked means, mid-sized loaders for material handling and loading transport vehicles, block separation and handling, management of waste stone by temporary stockpiling and using trucks to transport the quarry product off the site.
- 7.5.3. It notes there would be minimal sediment runoff and dust generation due to the small extent of soil and subsoil on the site. It notes that the extraction of limestone would be permanent and irreversible and otherwise that there would be no significant effects on material assets. It notes no impacts on geological resources outside the site boundary. Potential impacts from leaks and spills on the site would be continuously managed and the measures outlined such as hydrocarbon interceptors can be conditioned should permission be granted.
- 7.5.4. In relation to the stability of the quarry, the report notes that industry standard slope angles, bench heights and bench widths would be used for extraction operations. Table 2.1 of the Planning Report notes the pollution control measures to be applied including in relation to hydrocarbon control, operational controls, sediment management, the wheel wash and access road and in relation to monitoring and maintenance. I consider that these measures, which can be conditioned should permission be granted, would be robust from a liquids-based pollution control management perspective.
- 7.5.5. In relation to waste management, the Planning Report notes that waste produced on the site is minimised and that systems are in place as part of the development to control and manage waste materials either through recycling or re-use. I concur with the Planning Report that the development is not vulnerable to accidents, unplanned

events or natural disasters owing to the modest size of the development, the absence of blasting, the material handled and the distance from sensitive receptors.

Water

- 7.5.6. In relation to water supply, I note that there is a quarry supply well. The Planning Report notes that a quarry water management system is in place for the wheel wash and dust suppression and that staff are required to bring potable water on to the site for the welfare facilities. I note this is contradicted where it is stated that drinking water will be from the on-site well.
- 7.5.7. It notes the location of the Ballinduff stream, which flows to Lough Corrib, c.1.45km to the east. It also notes that the Inish stream is c.1.27km to the south. It notes that both of these streams and Lough Corrib had a good status in the two most recent WFD five year periods and that the risk status of these water bodies is “not at risk”.
- 7.5.8. It notes that the groundwater body has a vulnerability rating of extreme as there is rock at the surface. The status for the groundwater body is noted to be good. I note the submission of a Hydrogeological Investigation report prepared by Aqua Geo Services. There were two investigation stages. Phase 1 in Autumn 2024 included a desktop survey, two walk over surveys, a ground conductivity scan of the quarry floor, seven 2D resistivity line of length 1.74km in surrounding fields and hourly readings from the quarry supply well.
- 7.5.9. Phase 2 involved the drilling of four cored/air-rotary boreholes and construction of dual-level piezometers and single piezometer, rising/falling head tests and short slug tests as well as collection of groundwater and sump-water samples for laboratory analysis. The key findings of the reports show a maximum groundwater level of c.10m AOD and that Lough Corrib does not exhibit any measurable response to groundwater inflows from the quarry.
- 7.5.10. The Hydrogeological Report prepared by Aqua Geo Services notes that groundwater level monitoring was conducted at the quarry supply well between 02/10/2024 and 15/09/2025. It notes that the quarry currently operates below the water table and that dewatering is managed via a float-switch controlled pump in the quarry sump. It recommends a minimum 1m buffer be maintained above the highest recorded water level, i.e. at 11.00m OD so that extraction activities would be continued above the water table and it states that this is feasible.

- 7.5.11. The Hydrogeological Addendum report, similar to the first report suggests that no active dewatering would occur but the report is vague on this matter, for example it states in Section IX that *“future extraction should remain above the water table unless and until a robust discharge management plan and monitoring programme is established”*. I also note that the report notes existing discharge to groundwater but that future discharge will be to surface water although Sections I.5, VI.2 and VII.2 suggests discharge is to groundwater. It notes the requirement for *“a robust discharge management plan”* to be established (Section IX).
- 7.5.12. It notes that the sump has sufficient capacity to deal with stormwater runoff without a requirement for dewatering although a direct discharge licence application to the EPA would be necessary. In terms of the findings in relation to groundwater quality, the report noted that *“the level of Total Suspended Solids from the quarry discharge are deemed as elevated, thus indicating that there would be a need for additional settlement of fine material within the quarry system. This will not be relevant for the future operation as there will be no discharge of groundwater in the future”*. Except for the suspended solids, it notes that the discharge from the quarry is Groundwater Regulation compliant.
- 7.5.13. While the report suggests this can be remedied in the future to eliminate the suspended solids, I note that this has taken place for the existing development for retention. It notes that with the quarry floor set at a minimum of 11.00m OD, the groundwater levels will naturally recover within the existing quarry box as this will, in effect, become a sump area for surface water management.
- 7.5.14. In relation to potential sources of contamination, the report notes that drinking water would be managed from the onsite well and that foul wastewater would be managed via contracted portable toilets. This would eliminate the need for sewer or treatment system connections. It notes that surface water runoff is expected to carry low levels of suspended solids and that these will settle in the quarry sump where feasible and this is periodically pumped with discharge to a wooded area in the south-west corner of the landholding (Section II.3 of Hydrogeological Report). Outside the quarry area, uncontrolled runoff would be controlled by installing hardstand drainage and collecting washdown water in the sump system (Section XI.2.3 of Hydrogeological Report).

- 7.5.15. While I have noted limitations of the submitted reports above, I note that the Hydrogeological Addendum report notes that the raw water data between 2015 and 2025 confirms no deterioration, perturbation, or trend is detectable near the shoreline of Lough Corrib in line with the expected hydrological dilution expected between the quarry and the lake. This is in the context of the existing dewatering.
- 7.5.16. In terms of local effects, while it notes that the discharge associated with the dewatering was never monitored, that the single sump water sample taken showed no issues and that the 2025 results indicate no detectable PAHs and low level TPH with an unknown pattern interpreted by the laboratory as naturally occurring hydrocarbons. The addendum report notes that *“while the source cannot formally be described as “free from contaminants,” the absence of any signal downstream provides strong practical evidence that if contaminants were present at source, they did not propagate to the receptor at environmentally meaningful levels”*. This is confirmed by the KC-GWS water supply raw water dataset (for the aquifer).
- 7.5.17. It notes that the existing pollution control measures on the site include the storage of oil and fuels on hardstanding to prevent leaks into the environment and regular staff training in the use of spill kits. The report notes that *“even if groundwater derived from the quarry were entering the lake, the long-term and daily raw-water data show that such contributions are:*
- *chemically indistinguishable from natural groundwater inputs, and*
 - *volumetrically trivial within the scale of the lower Corrib system.*
- Long-term monitoring data therefore demonstrates that water quality parameters within Lough Corrib remain stable and within regulatory limits, with no evidence of adverse impacts attributable to quarry operations”*. I note no such monitoring results are provided in relation to the pre-development situation.
- 7.5.18. It also noted no significant effects within 13m of the shore were recorded and noted no aspects of concern. Noting the findings of the submitted reports on Hydrogeology, including the site investigations, and the limitations of same which I have noted above, based on the monitoring results (post commencement of development) I do not consider that the existing quarry and proposed development have resulted or would result in significant negative impacts on water-based

receptors in the area or on the groundwater that is hydrologically connected to the quarry.

- 7.5.19. I note that the Planning Report additionally proposes monitoring in line with the 2006 EPA guidelines. It proposes monthly data be downloaded from the quarry sump and automatic logger and that an annual summary be submitted to the Council and that any sustained rise in groundwater level that approaches the 11m AOD working floor would trigger a review of the extraction level.
- 7.5.20. I note that section XI of the Hydrogeology report outlines the mitigation measures recommended and should permission be granted I recommend these be required by condition to protect local groundwater. (To note these mitigation measures control for impacts on the immediate receiving environment and given the distance to the nearest Natura 2000 site, are not required or relevant for the purposes of AA screening). I also consider that the recommendations of the Hydrogeological Addendum report should be required to be implemented by condition should permission be granted.
- 7.5.21. It also proposes monitoring of groundwater quality, of the hardstand interceptor effluent and visual inspections of drains and other elements to check for evidence of sediment build up. Should permission be granted, I recommend this be conditioned as an additional control per the measures outlined in Section 6 of the submitted Planning Report.

Air Quality

- 7.5.22. The submitted Planning Report notes that the proposed development would not significantly alter the existing baseline environment which includes air emissions from dust generated by existing mechanical activities on-site and the emissions from the adjoining N84 road. I note the submitted Air Quality Impact Assessment report prepared by Quarry Consulting where an absence of local background data is noted. It uses the Athenry weather station as a proxy for being the closest relating to hourly rainfall.
- 7.5.23. The report outlines the standard measures in place for dust which includes haul road dampening, water fed cutting, paved access and wheel wash. I note that the main activity on the site in relation to air emissions is stone cutting, extraction and related

vehicle movements. I note that the effective baseline for the assessment is the existing environment which includes the current quarry extraction.

- 7.5.24. It notes that there are c.7 houses within a 400m radius of the quarry. This is mapped in Figure 3 of the report. It notes the location within Air Quality Zone D (rural Ireland) where the most recent data for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} is taken from other stations in zone D. It notes that all monitored concentrations are below the relevant standards per Table 6. Per the Table 7 summary of the impact assessment results, it notes the risk from dust emissions from the proposed development, without any mitigation measures, shows a negligible effect at each of the receptors. It notes that residual dust and PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} are at levels below EPA and EU limits for residential and ecological receptors. I note that the closest monitoring station is at Claremorris which is c.26km to the north and that no local monitoring has been undertaken.
- 7.5.25. I note the nearest dwelling is 118m away, the next dwelling is 165m away and that there are 7 houses within 400m what would normally be considered within the potential dust deposition zone. I note these measurements are taken from the site boundaries. However, the distance of the nearest dwelling from the extraction area is c.156m. Should permission be granted I consider that standard mitigation measures would be required in relation to dust impacts on these receptors.
- 7.5.26. Quarry traffic levels are noted to be 15 to 20 HGV movements per weeks and that this is below the screening threshold for combustion-emission impacts. I note that the Planning Report proposes that the specific limits from the 2006 EPA guidelines be adopted for monitoring purposes and that dust monitoring will be regularly carried out at the site boundaries.
- 7.5.27. The Air Quality Impact Assessment report concludes that the scheme would have no significant air quality effect. This would be consistent with my site observations where I observed limited dust emissions, mainly related to cutting of stone. I consider these findings to be reasonable and subject to standard dust emission conditions and a requirement for the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in Table 8 of the Air Quality Impact Assessment, I am satisfied that the potential effects on air quality would not be unduly negative for the surrounding area.

Noise

- 7.5.28. In relation to potential noise impacts, I note the site is within a rural area with a dispersed settlement pattern. The Planning Report notes that sensitive receptors are few in this context with the nearest residence c.118m from the site boundary or c.156m from the quarry extraction area. It notes the general noise environment which also includes traffic noise from the N84 road and that the baseline includes the noise associated with extraction of limestone. However, given that the application is also for retention, I do not consider this to be a reasonable assumption.
- 7.5.29. I note the submitted Noise Assessment report prepared by Quarry Consulting. Table 8 shows the operational noise predicted would be at levels below the daytime limits (55dB(A)) for the sensitive receptors monitored to the east and west adjacent to the site per Figure NIA 1 of the report. This represents a worst case scenario as it assumes the plant will be used continuously on the site. Table 10 of the Noise Assessment includes mitigation measures including landscaping barriers, temporary screen berms, continuous water cooling of wire saws to reduce friction and controls on the hours of operation.
- 7.5.30. I note that the Planning Report proposes ongoing environmental monitoring be conducted and that the specific limits from the 2006 EPA guidelines be adopted. In this regard, it proposes annual noise monitoring. Noting this and the noise assessment with which I am satisfied, should permission be granted, in addition to requiring the implementation of the listed mitigation measures, I recommend a standard noise limit condition in line with the quarry guidelines be applied, i.e. below 55dB LAeq, 1h. This should be measured at a point adjacent to the closest sensitive receptors both to the east and the west and between these points and the subject site.

7.6. Cultural Heritage and the Landscape

- 7.6.1. I note that the CDP landscape sensitivity rating for the area is “low” and that there are no identified scenic routes or viewpoints of concern. Having visited the site, I agree with the Planning Report that the site enjoys a high degree of visual enclosure due to the flat landscape and the landscaping that largely encloses the site. I note that the quarry is not visible from the public road at the site entrance.
- 7.6.2. I consider that the existing development largely integrates with the site and the surroundings with its limited visibility from outside the site. In my opinion, the

proposed development would not significantly alter this relationship with the area. I note that long-term, there would be no significant visual impact on the landscape of the area. I am satisfied that the development and proposed development would not result in significant negative undue visual impacts on the area.

- 7.6.3. I note no potential impacts in relation to cultural heritage noting that the nearest monument is c.30m from the site which is outside the minimum buffer zone. I note that the Planner's Report notes that the site "slightly overlaps" the zone of influence of SMR GA02379. Should permission be granted, I recommend a standard archaeological control condition be applied to require best practice measures be employed in relation to any potential interference with archaeology related to national monuments in the vicinity and for no further extension of activity in the direction of the SMR.
- 7.6.4. The submitted Planning Report notes that there are 8 no. houses within 500m of the quarry. It notes that three additional dwellings were granted permission in the last two years and that the nearest residential property is 118m from the site boundary and 156m from the extraction area.
- 7.6.5. The topography of the surrounding area is noted to be generally flat with no significant highpoints noted within 6km per the Planning Report. In relation to the restoration of the site, the submitted Planning Report notes that the lower portion of the existing void (below c.11.00mOD) will be allowed to re-flood passively with no active dewatering to be undertaken. On this basis, it notes that there would be no requirement for a discharge licence. This relates to the period following the cessation of the development.
- 7.6.6. Following cessation of quarry operations, it is planned that all plant and machinery will be removed from the quarry void, the area will be left for natural recolonisation and that all existing boundary fences will be retained to ensure site security. It is stated that the plan will follow the 2006 EPA guidelines. I note that there is a lack of detail in the minimal proposals outlined in this regard. Should permission be granted, I recommend a condition be required for the submission of detail proposals for site restoration for agreement with the P.A..

8.0 EIA Screening

- 8.1.1. I note the details submitted on appeal in relation to requirements for an EIAR. I have provided a full assessment of EIAR requirements in the assessment section of this report and in the attached appendices.
- 8.1.2. Having regard to: -
1. The criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular
 - (a) the limited nature and scale of the existing and proposed quarry development, in an established agricultural area already the site of an established quarry,
 - (b) the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity, and the proposed mitigation measures, recommendations and plans to be provided as part of the proposed development
 - (c) the location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 109(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).
 2. the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant
 3. the features and measures proposed by the applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment, and in particular the proposal to limit the water, air and noise based impacts, the biodiversity measures proposed in relation to the Priority Annex I habitat and the limited level of traffic to be generated by the proposal.
- 8.1.3. I conclude that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and that an environmental impact assessment report is not required. Please see attached Preliminary Examination and EIA Screening Determination (Form 1 and Form 3) in the appendices to this report.

9.0 AA Screening

- 9.1. See Appendix 3 for detailed screening. In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on Lough Corrib SAC and Lough Corrib SPA in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 9.2. This determination is based on:
- The nature of the works.
 - The distance and nature of the potential connections to the European sites.
 - The submitted AA Screening Report and Hydrogeological report.
 - NPWS data.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

- 10.1. An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken in accordance with Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), as transposed by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003, as amended, and with regard to the River Basin Management Plan 2022–2027. The receiving water environment has been identified and assessed, see Appendix 4 attached.
- 10.2. Having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, and the mitigation measures incorporated into the design, proposed and which can be conditioned, it is concluded that the proposed development will not:
- Result in deterioration of the ecological, chemical, or quantitative status of any relevant surface water or groundwater body;
 - Increase pollutant loading or alter the hydrological regime of any receiving watercourse;
 - Prevent or impede achievement of environmental objectives under the applicable River Basin Management Plan.

10.3. Any residual risks are capable of being addressed through the proposed mitigation measures which can be conditioned. The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend that permission be refused for the reasons stated below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The vehicular entrance for retention adjoins a national secondary road, the N84 where, consistent with '*Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' (2012), Policy Objective NR 1 (Protection of Strategic Roads) and Policy Objective NR 4 (New Accesses Directly on National Roads) of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 seek to avoid the creation of additional access points from new development on to such national roads. As the development for retention is for the new entrance that was associated with the quarry for retention, this would be contrary to national and local policy. The applicant has also failed to demonstrate that adequate sightlines would be provided in accordance with DM Standard 28 and Table 15.3 of the Development Plan where 215 metres is required and this is dependent on lands on the opposite side of the road to the south-east outside the control of the applicant which would need to be kept clear of vegetation. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to policy and would interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic on the public road and would endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. Having regard to the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the existence of the Priority Annex I limestone habitat on parts of the subject site, there has been a failure to demonstrate how such priority habitat has not been significantly impacted to date and how it would not be further significantly impacted by the proposed development. It therefore cannot be concluded that it

would be protected in line with the requirements of Policy NHB 1 (Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species) and DM Standard 50 (Environmental Assessments) of the County Development Plan. Such failure to protect a Priority Annex I limestone habitat would materially contravene the above policies of the Development Plan and is contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

Ciarán Daly
Planning Inspector

15th July 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-501187-GY-26
Proposed Development Summary	Retention and continuation of quarrying activities (for dimension stone) and associated works.
Development Address	Ballydonnellan, Headford, Co. Galway.
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA?	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2.
	☐ No, No further action required.
(For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.	State the Class here

EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
☐ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	State the Class and state the relevant threshold Class 2 <i>(b) Extraction of stone, gravel, sand or clay, where the area of extraction would be greater than 5 hectares.</i> The proposed development includes Retention and continuation of quarrying activities for 7 years within the application area of 4.5ha for the

	extraction by mechanical means only (wire and chain saws) of dimension stone that includes: - Extractions within an area of 2.4ha. - Processing and storage of quarried material.
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☒	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3) See Table 4.2 of the submitted EIA Screening Report.
No ☐	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Form 3 – EIA Screening Determination

A. CASE DETAILS		
An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	PL-501187-GY-26	
Development Summary	Retention and continuation of quarrying activities (for dimension stone) and associated works.	
	Yes / No / N/A	Comment (if relevant)
1. Was a Screening Determination carried out by the PA?	Yes	The PA concluded that a sub-threshold EIAR was not required.
2. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?	Yes	See Table 4.2 of the EIA Screening Report submitted by the applicant.
3. Has an AA screening report or NIS been submitted?	Yes	Report in Support of Appropriate Assessment Stage 1 Screening prepared by Quarry Consulting
4. Is a IED/ IPC or Waste Licence (or review of licence) required from the EPA? If YES has the EPA commented on the need for an EIAR?	No	
5. Have any other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment which have a significant bearing on the project been	N/A	Hydrogeological Assessment and Hydrogeological Addendum reports - WFD

carried out pursuant to other relevant Directives – for example SEA			
B. EXAMINATION	Yes/ No/ Uncertain	Briefly describe the nature and extent and Mitigation Measures (where relevant) (having regard to the probability, magnitude (including population size affected), complexity, duration, frequency, intensity, and reversibility of impact) Mitigation measures –Where relevant specify features or measures proposed by the applicant to avoid or prevent a significant effect.	Is this likely to result in significant effects on the environment? Yes/ No/ Uncertain
This screening examination should be read with, and in light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith			
1. Characteristics of proposed development (including demolition, construction, operation, or decommissioning)			
1.1 Is the project significantly different in character or scale to the existing surrounding or environment?	No	The area of extraction would be 2.4ha which is significantly under the 5ha threshold for EIA. While the quarry and future quarry area would have a different character to the surrounding agricultural lands, the extraction area is just less than half the threshold area such that the character and the scale is and would not be significantly different to the surrounding environment relative to the EIA threshold.	No

		I am satisfied that with an extraction area of 2.4ha., significant effects on the environment are not likely.	
1.2 Will construction, operation, decommissioning or demolition works cause physical changes to the locality (topography, land use, waterbodies)?	No	Demolition, extraction, associated works and stone cutting, vehicle movements and land restoration as part of existing complex would take place entirely within curtilage of site already used as a quarry with localised changes only.	No.
1.3 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy, especially resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes	Construction and operation of the proposed development will utilise natural resources such as water, limestone and energy. No, these resources are not in short supply. Modest size quarry operation. Extraction of limestone. Existing dewatering not proposed to continue. While potential significant effects cannot be ruled out in relation to the Priority Annex I habitat, per the EIA threshold these are not a scale of concern. Negligible use of water relative to impact on groundwater per hydrogeological reports.	No
1.4 Will the project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of	Yes	Demolition/extraction impacts must be assessed. Airborne dust, water, traffic,	No.

substance which would be harmful to human health or the environment?		noise and restoration impacts must be assessed also. See Section 7.0. Noise Impact Assessment, Air Quality Impact Assessment, Hydrogeological Assessments, Traffic and Transport Assessment and Restoration Plan submitted	
1.5 Will the project produce solid waste, release pollutants or any hazardous / toxic / noxious substances?	Yes	The construction and operation of the proposal will generate solid stone waste which will be re-used or recycled. Waste will be managed by re-use or recycling and a standard waste management condition can be applied to ensure best practice measures area applied.	No.
1.6 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes	Nature of stone cutting and extraction operations is such that highly unlikely. Mitigation measures are proposed in the Hydrogeological reports such as hydrocarbon interceptors to ensure no significant contamination and raw water data shows no existing issues. The recommendations and mitigation measures outlined in the Hydrogeological reports can be conditioned to ensure implementation.	No.

1.7 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes	Potential to generate pollution or potential nuisance associated with Air, Noise and Traffic. Standard mitigation measures for air, noise and traffic for quarries recommended. Best practice methods will be utilised during operations to mitigate potential impacts from pollution on the local environment. Impacts expected to be minimal.	No.
1.8 Will there be any risks to human health, for example due to water contamination or air pollution?	Yes	The monitoring data from the submitted Hydrogeological reports show no existing human health impacts and the similar future operations without current dewatering and the mitigation measures including for the effective sump would be effective. Water testing results show no significant effects Standard mitigation measures for air, noise and traffic.	No.
1.9 Will there be any risk of major accidents that could affect human health or the environment?	No	No major accident hazards associated with proposal.	No
1.10 Will the project affect the social environment (population, employment)	Yes	Potential impacts due to dust, traffic and noise can be adequately mitigated.	No.

1.11 Is the project part of a wider large scale change that could result in cumulative effects on the environment?	No	Extraction area at 2.4ha is significantly less than the 5ha EIA threshold and is not part of a wider large scale change.	No
2. Location of proposed development			
2.1 Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or have the potential to impact on any of the following: - European site (SAC/ SPA/ pSAC/ pSPA) - NHA/ pNHA - Designated Nature Reserve - Designated refuge for flora or fauna - Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation/conservation/ protection of which is an objective of a development plan/ LAP/ draft plan or variation of a plan	Yes	The proposed development is not located within or bordering a Natura 2000 site or NHA / PNHA. No significant effects on these sites were found in the AA Screening and in Section 7.4 above. Potential negative effects on Priority Annex I Limestone habitat on the site – see Section 7.0. Land use surrounding the site comprises managed agricultural land.	No
2.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, for example: for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	No	There are no important or sensitive species which are known to be present in the area. Land use surrounding the site comprises managed agricultural land. An AA Screening report and EIA Screening report have been completed. There is a lack of detail in relation to the April 2024 survey carried out. Ecological impact is assessed as low although this is based on a baseline with the existing	No

		development for retention having been carried out	
2.3 Are there any other features of landscape, historic, archaeological, or cultural importance that could be affected?	No	The proposal will take place within the curtilage of an existing established quarry. Views will be similar to the existing complex. Screening will be mainly provided by existing natural screening along site boundaries. Site partially within the zone of influence of a national monument.	No. Viewpoints not effected beyond existing situation.
2.4 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, for example: forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?	No	The submitted planning report has noted the existing Priority Annex I limestone habitat on and adjacent to the site. There is an absence of information on which to conclude there would be no significant impact on this habitat although this is not a significant scale relative to the EIA threshold.	No
2.5 Are there any water resources including surface waters, for example: rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or groundwaters which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	No	Foul and surface water management can be adequately managed through the measures outlined in the submitted hydrogeological reports and by condition	No
2.6 Is the location susceptible to subsidence, landslides or erosion?	No	No significant land issues noted in this regard in the submitted planning report.	No
2.7 Are there any key transport routes (e.g. National primary Roads) on or around the	No	The site access is directly on to the N84, a national secondary road. National policy	No

location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?		is against new accesses on to such roads as I have recommended a refusal of permission in this regard. No congestion or environment problems likely given limited traffic volume generated, see TTA submitted.	
2.8 Are there existing sensitive land uses or community facilities (such as hospitals, schools etc) which could be affected by the project?	No	Some dispersed housing in the area but removed from site which is an existing quarry.	No
3. Any other factors that should be considered which could lead to environmental impacts			
3.1 Cumulative Effects: Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulative effects during the construction/ operation phase?	No	Cumulative impacts with other development permitted and applied for in the area have been considered and are not likely to give rise to significant impacts.	No
3.2 Transboundary Effects: Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	No	N/A	No
3.3 Are there any other relevant considerations?	No		
C. CONCLUSION			
No real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	☒	EIAR Not Required	
Real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	☐	EIAR Required	
D. MAIN REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS			

EG - EIAR not Required

Having regard to: -

1. the criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular
 - (a) the limited nature and scale of the existing and proposed quarry development, in an established agricultural area already the site of an established quarry,
 - (b) the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity, and the proposed mitigation measures, recommendations and plans to be provided as part of the proposed development
 - (c) the location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 109(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).
2. the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant
3. the features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment, and in particular the proposal to limit the water, air and noise based impacts, the biodiversity measures proposed in relation to the Priority Annex I habitat and the limited level of traffic to be generated by the proposal.

The Commission concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and that an environmental impact assessment report is not required.

Inspector _____

Date _____

Approved (DP/ADP) _____

Date _____

Appendix 3: AA Screening

Test for likely significant effects

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Case Reference Number: PL-501187-GY-26	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics Retention and continuation of quarrying activities (for dimension stone) and associated works.	
Brief description of project	The proposed development, in summary, consists of the following: • Retention and continuation of quarrying activities for 7 years within the application area of 4.5ha for the extraction by mechanical means only (wire and chain saws) of dimension stone that includes: - Extractions within an area of 2.4ha. - Processing and storage of quarried material. - Provision of a wheel wash. - Provision of a hardstand area and hydrocarbon interceptor. - Ancillary site works.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	Proposed extraction area within a site area of 2.4ha on a site area of 4.5ha where previous quarrying has been undertaken. The site is c.0.65km north of Lough Corrib SAC (site code 000297).

	The proposed development involves mainly involves stone cutting and movement of stone on and off the site and would result in noise, vibration and dust emissions from the stone cutting, extraction and movement.
Screening report	Y – Report in Support of Appropriate Assessment Stage 1 Screening prepared by Quarry Consulting, authored by Irene Curran BSc (Environmental Science), MSc Town and Country Planning, Dip Field Ecology, MRTPI. Hydrogeological Addendum for a quarry operation at Ballydonnelan, Headford, Co. Galway has been prepared by Aqua Geoservices Ltd.
Natura Impact Statement	N
Relevant submissions	The Heritage Council noted a Priority Annex I Limestone Pavement habitat on the site “ <i>with the most important parcel overlapping with the development boundary on the western section of the site</i> ”. It recommended that an assessment of the development impacts on the habitat be provided including the entire site area and for any habitats immediately adjacent.
Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government consulted but no response received.	
Following the completion of all extraction operations, the applicant has submitted that the application area is to be restored to a natural habitat with beneficial after-uses per those recommended in the EPA Guidelines ‘Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry’ (2006).	

Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model

European Site (code)	Qualifying interests¹ Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections²	Consider further in screening³ Y/N
Lough Corrib SAC (site code 000297).	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-	c.0.65km to south	Potential connection via groundwater and surface water channels to the Ballinduff Stream c.1.45km to the east and which flows into the SAC to the south.	Y

	Batrachion vegetation [3260] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]			
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	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Bog woodland [91D0] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] Austropotamobius pallipes (White- clawed Crayfish) [1092] Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]			
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	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833] Hamatocaulis vernicosus (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216] NPWS, 28th April 2017.			
Lough Corrib SPA (site code 004042)	Pochard (Aythya ferina) [A059] Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061] Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065] Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082] Coot (Fulica atra) [A125]	c.0.85km to the south	Potential connection via groundwater and surface water channels to the Ballinduff Stream c.1.45km to the east and which flows into the SPA to the south.	Y

	Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>) [A857] Gadwall (<i>Mareca strepera</i>) [A889] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] NPWS, 27th January 2023.			
¹ Summary description / cross reference to NPWS website is acceptable at this stage in the report ² Based on source-pathway-receptor: Direct/ indirect/ tentative/ none, via surface water/ ground water/ air/ use of habitats by mobile species				

³ if no connections: N

Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites

AA Screening matrix

Site name Qualifying interests	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
Site 1: Lough Corrib SAC (site code 000297) QI list as above	Direct: N/A Indirect See Hydrogeological Addendum report which notes that the volumes of water associated with the quarry operation are insignificant in the context of Lough Corrib. It noted that across 10 years, based on raw-water quality data, none of the quarry sensitive parameters such as nutrients, show any deterioration, drift or anomaly. It noted parameters remain stable and entirely typical of Lower Lough Corrib's seasonal and meteorological cycles. It noted that the results demonstrate that the lake does	No effects.

	not exhibit any measurable response to groundwater flows from Ballydonnellan Quarry. No impacts. The Hydrogeological Addendum report notes no direct surface-water outfall, ditch, drain or engineered connection linking the quarry to the lakeshore or to Ballinduff Stream. Noting this, no impacts. I note the proposed mitigation measures which would do not effect this conclusion as there is no surface water discharge pathway from the site. No impacts.	
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Y	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects?	
	Impacts	Effects
Site 2: Lough Corrib SPA (site code 004042) QI list as above	Direct: N/A Indirect The volume of water associated with the quarry operation is insignificant. The	No effects.

	raw water data over 10 years demonstrate no impacts. The Hydrogeological report notes that the Lough Corrib does not exhibit any measurable response to groundwater flows from Ballydonnellan Quarry. No surface water link. The site is not a suitable ex-situ habitat for the QI's of the SPA. No impacts.	
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Y	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects?	
Step 4: Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on Lough Corrib SAC and Lough Corrib SPA. The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s). No further assessment is required for the project.		

No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions.

Screening Determination

Finding of no likely significant effects

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on Lough Corrib SAC and Lough Corrib SPA in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This determination is based on:

- The nature of the works.
- The distance and nature of the potential connections to the European sites.
- The submitted AA Screening Report and Hydrogeological report.
- NPWS data.

Appendix 4 - WFD Impact Assessment Scoping

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING TABLE			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
An Coimisiún Pleanála ref. no.	PL-501187-GY-26	Townland, address	Ballydonnellan, Headford, Co. Galway.
Description of project		Retention and continuation of quarrying activities and associated works.	
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,		The rural quarry site includes an area of 2.4ha which has been subject to stone extraction including below the water table requiring dewatering. There is karstified limestone bedrock below the surface and the nearest stream is c.1.45km to the east.	
Proposed surface water details		Pollution control runoff measures such as hydrocarbon interceptor.	
Proposed water supply source & available capacity		Existing well.	
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues		N/A	
Others?		Other submitted documents: AA Screening Report, EIA Screening Report, three hydrogeological reports.	

Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection

Identified water body	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater) (Consider all phases)	Mitigation Measures proposed	Is mitigation sufficient? Will there be any residual impacts?
Yes	Clare-Corrib Groundwater Body (IE_WE_G_0020)	Good	Not at risk	Nutrient runoff, karst vulnerability, extractive industries, urban runoff, municipal wastewater treatment, channelization, high flow velocities and low storage capacity.	Below site, karstified limestone aquifer which is extremely vulnerable.	Best practice extraction measures can be conditioned. Measures outlined in Hydrogeological reports such as hydrocarbon interceptor to ensure no untreated or polluted water leaves the site can be conditioned. Hydrogeological reports including raw water data identify no issues from existing operations despite dewatering currently taking place.	Yes, no residual impacts.
Yes	Ballinduff Stream_010 river waterbody (IE_WE_30B050100)	Good	Not at risk	Nutrient enrichment and siltation and bank erosion from agricultural activities; rapid pathway	Via groundwater and water channels.	Best practice extraction measures can be conditioned. Measures outlined in Hydrogeological reports	Yes, no residual impacts.

				delivery via the aquifer, channelisation and habitat loss from physical alterations and domestic wastewater treatment systems.	c.1.45km distance.	such as hydrocarbon interceptor to ensure no untreated or polluted water leaves the site can be conditioned. Hydrogeological reports including raw water data identify no issues from existing operations despite dewatering currently taking place.	
Yes	Headford Stream_020 river waterbody (IE_WE_30H010300)	Good	Not at risk	Municipal wastewater treatment system discharges, agricultural runoff – nutrient enrichment, vulnerable aquifer, domestic wastewater treatment systems, historical channelisation and lack of bankside vegetation.	Via groundwater and water channels. c.90m distance.	Best practice extraction measures can be conditioned. Measures outlined in Hydrogeological reports such as hydrocarbon interceptor to ensure no untreated or polluted water leaves the site can be conditioned. Hydrogeological reports including raw water data identify no issues from existing operations despite dewatering currently taking place.	Yes, no residual impacts.
Yes	Corrib_SC_010 lake waterbody	Good	Not at risk	Agriculture: phosphorus and nitrogen loadings, invasive species,	c.650m distance. Via groundwater	Best practice extraction measures can be conditioned.	Yes, no residual impacts.

				domestic wastewater treatment systems, pressures from flow regulation and alterations, urban and municipal runoff.	and river water channels via Ballinduff Stream.	Measures outlined in Hydrogeological reports such as hydrocarbon interceptor to ensure no untreated or polluted water leaves the site can be conditioned. Hydrogeological reports including raw water data identify no issues from existing operations despite dewatering currently taking place.	
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