

Ferndale
Carrigeen, Windmill Hill
Rathcoole
County Dublin
D24 DX54

September 10, 2024

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG- _____	
ABP- _____	
13 SEP 2024	
Fee: € _____	Type: _____
Time: <u>9.25</u>	By: <u>reg post</u>

RE: Objection to Substitute Consent Application for Quarry at Windmill Hill, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin

Case Number: ABP-310461-21

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to formally lodge our objection to the Substitute Consent Application for the quarry at Windmill Hill, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin (Case Number: ABP-310461-21). Our family has resided in this area for over 40 years, and during this time we have witnessed first-hand the negative effects of the quarry's continued operation and expansion. The following key concerns compel us to oppose this application.

1. Environmental and Public Health Concerns

The quarry's operations have had a severe impact on air quality in the surrounding area, with an alarming increase in dust pollution over the years. This poses a serious health risk to the local community, especially in a rapidly expanding urban area. Additionally, the water table, which many residents rely on for their water supply, is at risk due to ongoing quarry activities, potentially jeopardizing the quality of the water we depend on.

2. Traffic and Road Safety

The quarry's expansion has led to an increase in heavy truck traffic, particularly along the N7 near Junction 5. Trucks transporting materials from the quarry are often overloaded and uncovered, resulting in rubble being scattered along the overpass and slip roads. This poses a serious safety hazard to road users and increases the likelihood of a major accident on this critical route. These rural roads are ill-equipped to handle such a high volume of heavy vehicles, further exacerbating the risk to local residents and commuters alike.

3. Unlawful Expansion and Lack of Planning Permission

The quarry's continued expansion has occurred despite the absence of any valid planning permission. The ongoing operations have been allowed to proceed unchecked, despite strict zoning regulations on rural land. This disregard for proper planning procedures shows a blatant disregard for both the local community and the integrity of the planning system.

4. Lack of Enforcement by Local Authorities

It is particularly troubling that there has been a clear lack of enforcement from the local authorities in response to these ongoing breaches of planning regulations. This failure to hold the quarry accountable raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of any future stipulations or conditions that might be placed on the quarry if planning consent were granted. Given that local authorities are supplied by Behan's quarry, there is a fundamental conflict of interest that undermines any confidence that regulations will be enforced in the future.

5. Inconsistent Planning Decisions

It is also important to note that planning applications from local residents have previously been refused on the grounds of preserving local flora and fauna. It is grossly unfair that the same environmental considerations seem to be ignored when it comes to the quarry's operations. This inconsistency in decision-making is unacceptable and reflects poorly on the integrity of the planning process.

6. Continued Abuse of the Planning Process

There is also a serious concern regarding the applicant's continued abuse of the planning process. It appears that the applicant has taken full economic advantage of the lengthy planning process to expand operations beyond the approved boundaries without risk of enforcement or prosecution. During this time, they have reaped significant financial benefit from these breaches, operating outside the legal framework while facing no consequences. This is an unacceptable exploitation of the planning system and undermines the trust and fairness of the process.

7. Impact on Local Heritage

The quarry's expansion has had a devastating effect on the local landscape. Windmill Hill has been heavily eroded, and a historic windmill, which is a protected structure, is now in serious danger of collapse due to the proximity of the excavation. Despite this, only minimal and inadequate attempts have been made to protect this important local landmark.

Conclusion

In light of the environmental damage, public health risks, road safety concerns, unlawful expansion, lack of enforcement, abuse of the planning process, and inconsistent planning decisions, we strongly urge An Bord Pleanála to refuse substitute consent for this quarry. The quarry's continued operation and expansion are not in the best interests of the local community or the environment, and proper planning regulations must be upheld to protect both.

We request that our submission be acknowledged, and we would appreciate being kept informed of any relevant developments in relation to this case.

Yours faithfully,

Handwritten signatures of Damian Hickey and Kay Hickey. Damian's signature is on the left, and Kay's is on the right, both written in cursive.

Damian Hickey

Kay Hickey