

An
Bord
Pleanála

Planning Appeal Online Observation

Online Reference: (NPA-OBS-
000750)

Online Observation Details

Contact Name:	Paul La Rocque
Lodgement Date:	10/04/2022 22:48:15
Case Number / Description:	312981

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Paul La Rocque and Sophia La Rocque
14 Toureen terrace,
Passage West,
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An Bord Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.

April 10, 2022

**RE: Observation on PL04.312981 – Belvelly Port Facility, Marino (Townland), Marino Point, Cobh, Co. Cork
(Cork County Council ref. 20/6955)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make this observation on the appeal of Cllr Marcia D'Alton in relation to the development which Gouldings and the Belvelly Marino Development Company propose at Marino Point.

As a resident of Passage West, my sincere concerns about the proposed development at Marino Point are described below. This town of 5,800 people is one that understands shipping and the impact of living close to a port. Although I acknowledge that Marino Point is zoned for industrial development and that the proposed Gouldings/Port of Cork move from Centre Park Road and the City Quays could be good for Cork City, this cannot be at the expense of the quality of life of Passage West residents. Previous activity at Marino Point had severe and long-lasting impacts on the development of Passage West. This cannot be allowed again. It is therefore critical that the planning application would be honest in its assessment of potential impact on Passage West and would employ the best of modern technology and monitoring to minimise those impacts. I am a resident of Toureen terrace, Passage West, which is just over 400 meters away from Marino Point. I am writing for my wife, our 9-year-old daughter and myself. And I speak for all the other residents/ neighbors on my terrace of our strong concerns for the planned developments at Marino Point.

I am a resident of Toureen terrace, Passage West, which is just over 400 meters away from Marino Point. I am writing for my wife, our 10 year old daughter and myself. And I speak for all the other residents/ neighbors on my terrace of our strong concerns for the planned developments at Marino Point.

Ships noises from Marino Point are unbearable. It is a constant humming of engines, which is like a form of torture because it is relentless, 24 hours. These sleepless nights destroy our quality of life, and work life. This should not be happening in this day and age in a residential area - Passage West.

My wife was diagnosed with breast cancer at the beginning of September 2020 and there was a ship, the 'Sanskip Express' that was docked there nearly all of that month. It was having engine repairs and was delayed and so it stayed all the time and drove us to the point of madness. We contacted the Port of Cork with many complaints by email and phone calls. It got to the point that we wanted to sell our beloved forever home, and thought who would buy it with this industrial noise at the front of our house.

Industrial noise or any noise after a reasonable hour at night and before dawn is intolerable. There should be a curfew as in other countries where noise pollution is an offence in this curfew period.

When we bought our house in 2008 we did not think we would be living in an industrial estate, since the Port of Cork took over Marino Point. Further to this madness is a plan from Gouldings Chemicals Ltd to have an 'agricultural fertilizer facility' on our doorstep.

Why have Marino Point zoned for industrial use is beyond me, when it has so much more potential for the community like introducing parks, art/cultural centers, recreational activities. Or more development of Fota wildlife? Anything that would be better to benefit Cork, our community for a better and brighter future of this unique historical beauty spot. Not a fertilizer plant or ships berthing 24/7 on people's doorsteps.

The Cork County Council has gone a long way to develop the walkway and promotes the beauty of Cork Harbour. Many families, baby strollers, joggers, and cyclists use the walkway, which is right in front of our house. The health concerns of 'fertilizer' and 'industrial noise' adjacent to a residential area and a community exercising in the open air is beyond reasonable thought. It's preposterous.

1. Noise from jetty operations at night-time

Marino Point is only just over 400 metres from some homes in Passage West. Also, because Passage West slopes steeply up from the waterfront, many of the homes on the Passage West hills, although appearing to be at a distance from Marino Point, are actually remarkably close as the crow flies. Noise at Marino Point is heard clearly at both low and higher altitudes in Passage West. The narrow body of water that separates Marino Point from Passage West does not absorb sound. As is commonly known, sound travels over water. This is our experience in Passage West.

Operational noise from Marino Point is not such a concern during the day when the busyness of life has its own range of sound. It is however a very grave concern during the night. The Port of Cork says that it is a 24/7/365 port. They say that although they try to carry out their shipping operations during the day, there will be times when either due to weather or shipping schedules, it will be necessary to berth and load/offload ships at night. The impact of the noise and vibration from ships being guided into Marino Point by tugs at night with their collective engines running either forward or astern as the ship is manoeuvred alongside the jetty cannot be underestimated. This kind of night-time noise is not described in the planning application. It is essential that it is evaluated and its impact is minimised. When a ship is manoeuvring in the river, it can be as near as 350-400 metres from the Passage West waterfront.

2. Noise from ships' generators at night-time

When a ship is alongside the jetty, its generators run through the night. The generators run even when the ship's engines are off and when there is no loading/unloading. The generators provide the power that is essential for the ship's crew to live comfortably. However ironically, the noise from these generators can make a night's sleep very uncomfortable in Passage West. Their sound is like a low rumbling that seems to penetrate the walls of a home. The impact of generators at night was not mentioned in the planning application yet it is this impact that is most feared in Passage West. The planning application suggests that up to 100 ships will berth at Marino Point each year and that each will take 1-2 days to load/offload. In the case of fertiliser ships, offloading may take longer because it is dependent on dry weather. The implication for Passage West is that generators are likely to be running at the jetty on most nights of the week. It is essential that the impact of these generators is evaluated and that disturbance to Passage West residents is minimised.

3. Water quality in Lough Mahon

Passage West's greatest asset is its waterfront location on Cork Harbour. The waterside greenway running from Hop Island to Passage West is one of the most popular amenities in South Cork. When IFI was operating at Marino Point, the water in Lough Mahon was eutrophic. Since the closure of Lough Mahon, the treatment of sewerage from Cork City and the recent construction of the Lower Harbour sewerage scheme, Lough

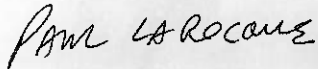
Mahon has become progressively cleaner. But it remains under pressure. At the moment, Lough Mahon is at risk of not meeting its water quality objectives. The heritage and future of our town is inextricably linked to Cork Harbour and it is vital for us that water quality would not be affected by the reintroduction of fertilisers to Marino Point. We want to see the best of technology employed by the proposed development to ensure that even under adverse conditions there is no loss of fertiliser material from ships, from handling on the quayside, from the ship to shore transfer operations or from the proposed Gouldings facility.

4. Responsibility for the proposed development

What is proposed in this planning application is the first step in the development of a portside industrial park with multiple operators. I ask the Board to define who will be responsible for impacts from that park. If a night-time activity at the jetty is causing disturbance in Passage West and I ring the Port of Cork to complain, I do not want to be told that the ship is servicing Gouldings and so has nothing to do with the Port. I want to know that I can connect with someone who will have the authority to take positive steps to resolve my issue. If it is evident that bulk unloading at the Marino Point quayside is causing material loss into the water and I ring the Port of Cork to complain, I do not want to be told that each jetty user is responsible for their own quayside cleanliness. If a ship is expected late at night, it is not one bit helpful that Cork County Council's Environment Department would be notified. It is we in Passage West, Marino Point's nearest neighbours, who need to be notified. Who will take responsibility for doing this? It is vital that one defined body would have responsibility for environmental impact and community liaison so that two-way communication can effectively be established between the proposed Belvelly Port Facility and residents in Passage West.

I ask the Board to please give consideration to my very real concerns as outlined. The relevant fee of €50 accompanies this observation.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PAUL LA ROCQUE". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. It is positioned above a light grey rectangular background.

Paul La Rocque

