

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 Location of the Subject Site

The subject site of c. 4.13 *hectares* which forms part of the wider ‘Kinnegad Quarry’ is located in County Meath, in the townland of Killaskillen. The applicant’s wider landholding (c. 286 hectares) also comprises parts of the townlands of Cappaboggan and Toor and borders the Kinnegad River and M6 motorway to the north. The quarry straddles and is accessed by a local road (L8021) under which a connecting underpass has been constructed. The limestone quarry lies to the south of this local road, with a shale quarry located to the north. The L8021 also forms the eastern boundary of the site and provides access to the village of Ballinabrackey, positioned 400m beyond the southern site boundary.

The applicant’s existing cement and asphalt plants are located within the wider landholding.

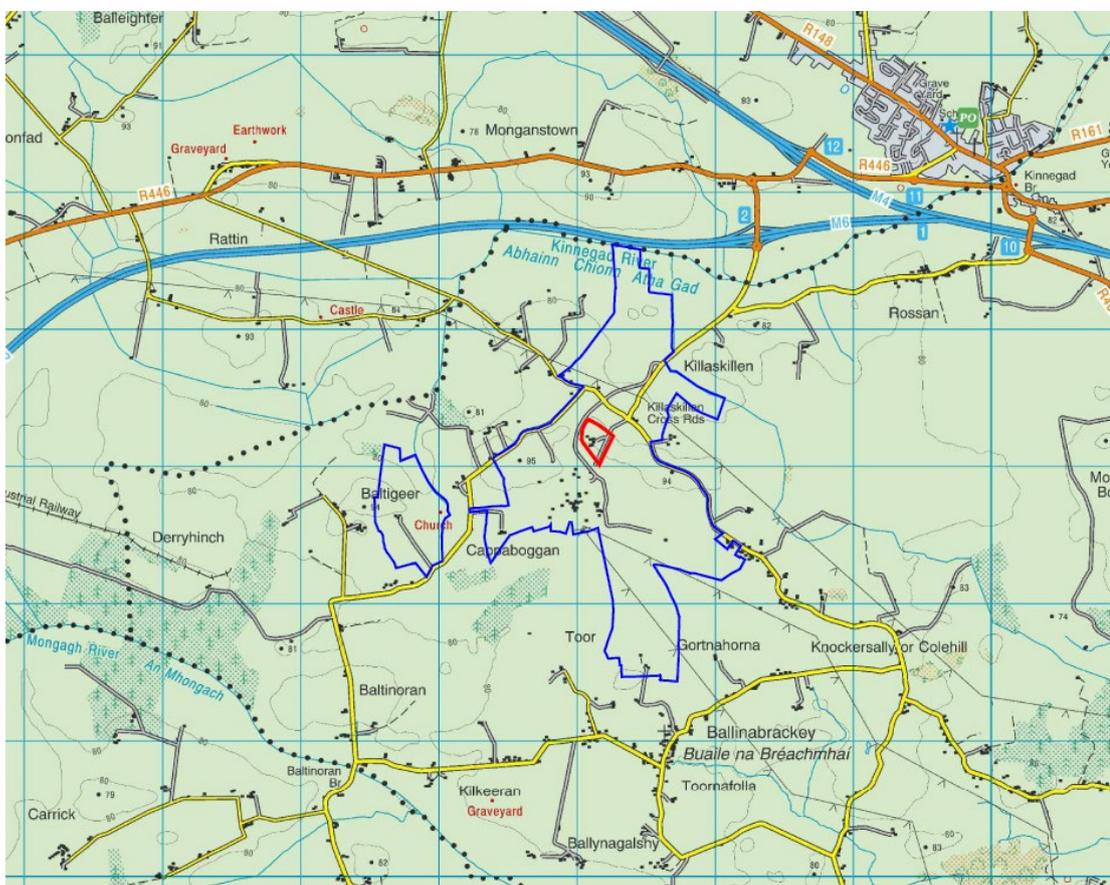


Figure 2.1: Location of Subject Site (indicative site outlined red with Breedon Cement Limited landholding outlined in blue). (Source: OS Discovery Series, annotated by Quarry Consulting 2022.)

2.2 Description of the Subject Site and context

The applicant’s landholding borders the Kinnegad River and M6 motorway to the north and straddles a local road (L8021) under which a connecting underpass has been constructed.

The cement works are located on the western side of the landholding, which are well screened by higher land to the north.

There are 110kv ESB lines traversing the southern portion of the landholding and connecting with the sub-station, which is located within the area of the cement plant.

Lands surrounding the subject site can be described as rural in character. Residential properties in the vicinity of the site primarily comprise of one-off dwellings fronting onto the county roads to the east and west of the site. In addition, there are a number of residential properties within the village of Ballinabrackey, which is located between approximately 4km south of the application site.

The nearest surface watercourse to the application site is the Kinnegad River which forms the northern boundary of the landholding. The general character of the landscape immediately north of the site is an open river valley with few trees and only low intermittent hedges. A number of field boundaries near the Kinnegad River are simple post and wire fences. The course of the Kinnegad River has been straightened in sections, including that forming the northern boundary of the overall cement plant site. To the east is slightly higher ground with dense tree and hedge cover, while to the west is an area of open fields and hedges lying along the valley of the Kinnegad River.



Figure 2.2: Location of Subject Site (indicative site outlined red). (Source: Quarry Consulting, cropped by TPA 2022.)

2.3 The Existing Quarry

The existing limestone quarry and cement works were granted planning permission by Meath County Council in April 1999 (Meath County Council Planning Reg. Ref. No. 98/2026). This permission was the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála, who subsequently upheld the decision of the Planning Authority and granted permission for the development in 2000 (An Bord Pleanála Ref. No. PL17.111198). A further application to extend the limestone Quarry was approved by Meath County Council in November 2009 (TA/900603). There have been various other applications within the wider landholding, and these are detailed in section 2.5 below.

2.4 Surrounding Area

Lands adjacent to the quarry are generally in agricultural or forestry-based use. Land in the area is generally farmed as moderate intensity agricultural grassland supporting livestock production. This description applies to field plots adjoining the western, northern and eastern boundaries of ownership.

Low-lying lands immediately south of the site host a narrow tract of peat bog (Toor Bog). Relatively small pockets of forestry plantation abut parts of this peat deposit, most notably at the southwestern end. Larger bogs where peat has been mechanically stripped on in the past are present 1km to the east (Bogtown Bog) and 1.3km to the west (Derryhinch Bog).

There is a relatively low-moderate density of one-off single residences in the area, mostly aligned along local roads, with some of these having farmsteads attached. The highest cluster of dwellings occur as a linear ribbon consisting about 20 residential dwellings close to the south-eastern boundary of the overall landholding, in the townland of Mount Prospect.

Further details of the surrounding context are outlined in *chapter 7 – Land Soils and Geology*.



Figure 2.3: Residential area to the northeast of the subject site. (Source: Googlemaps.ie cropped and annotated by TPA)



2.5 Planning Context

This section provides a brief overview of the planning context including the planning policies that are applicable to the subject site.

2.5.1 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

The NPF recognises that extractive industries are important for the supply of aggregates and construction materials and minerals to a variety of sectors, for both domestic requirements and for export. The role of the planning process in realising the potential of the extractive industries sector by identifying and protecting important reserves of aggregates and minerals from development that might prejudice their utilisation is recognised in the plan

The above is underlined by National Policy Objective 23 which seeks to:

Facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

As such, the NPF indicates that aggregates and minerals extraction will continue to be enabled where this is compatible with the protection of the environment in terms of air and water quality, natural and cultural heritage, the quality of life of residents in the vicinity, and provides for appropriate site rehabilitation.

2.5.2 Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

The subject lands are identified in the Development Plan as *RA Rural Areas* where the stated Objective is:

‘To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage.’

Permitted Uses in rural areas include Extractive Industry/Quarrying. Among the policies relating to the extractive industry within the plan include RD POL 21 & RD POL 22 (see below)

‘RD POL 21

To ensure that projects associated with the extractive industry carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive, where required.

RD POL 22

To facilitate the exploitation of the county’s natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area.’



2.6 Planning History

The following table provides a summary of the planning history relating to the subject site and the wider Breedon Cement Ltd. landholding (outlined in blue in Figure 2.1). The existing cement plant and other structures are not incorporated in the current proposed application.

The recent planning history at the site has been fully considered in terms of the assessment of potential cumulative impacts. In addition to the inclusion of other existing and/or approved developments in the cumulative assessment, it is noted that there is an expectation that cumulative assessment must “as far as practically possible” take into account reasonably foreseeable projects¹. In this regard it is noted that the applicants have also recently applied for a solar farm project on adjacent lands (Planning Ref: 22/958). As such it is advised that the solar project (although not yet permitted) much be considered reasonably foreseeable when determining the environmental impact of the proposal and it has been considered in the various chapters of this EIAR.

Reg. Ref.	Description of Development	Grant Date
98/2026 PL17.111198	Permission granted by An Bord Pleanála for new cement works and associated quarrying of limestone and shale including access road and associated activities on a site of 161.43ha.	26/04/00
98/1241 PL25.112428	Permission granted by An Bord Pleanála for the construction of 760m access road from N6 to proposed cement plant & associated quarries.	26/04/00
01/967	Permission granted by Meath County Council for the development of an asphalt plant and all associated infrastructure and structures including a new access road to connect to the approved cement plant road layout (to the west).	29/11/01
TA/20196	Permission granted by Meath County Council for the amendment of the phasing of the approved shale quarry and proposed extension to provide for extraction of an additional 500,000 tonnes per annum.	21/10/02
TA/40228	Permission granted by Meath County Council for an increase in the permitted output capacity of the cement plant from 450,000 tonnes per annum to 600,000 tonnes per annum. The development also included for the retention of relocated structures within the main processing area, retention of a reorganised materials handling area, retention of the extension of the south-eastern face of the limestone quarry over an area of 0.276 ha from the extent permitted under Planning Reg. Ref. No. 98/2026, retention of the weighbridge and office, retention of 2 No. settlement lagoons as constructed and retention of a revised site access layout.	16/08/04
TA/50145 PL17.213186	Permission granted by An Bord Pleanála for the use of Meat and Bone Meal (MBM) as an alternative fuel at the Killaskillen Cement Plant. Specifically, it was proposed to use up to 50,000 tonnes of MBM per annum, thereby substituting up to 45% of the coal burned at the plant.	15/12/05
TA/60580	Permission granted by Meath County Council for an increase in the processing capacity of the existing cement plant from the permitted production rate of 600,000 tonnes per annum (permitted under Planning Reg. Ref. No. TA-40228) to 700,000 tonnes per annum, and	05/02/07

¹ This approach was confirmed in the case of *Sinead Fitzpatrick and Alan Daly v An Bord Pleanála's and Galway County Council and Apple Distribution International [2019] IESC 23*.



	the use of alternative raw materials and renewable fuels (to those permitted in Planning Reg. Ref. Nos. 982026 & TA-50145) in the cement production process.	
TA/60581	Permission granted by Meath County Council to develop a concrete products production area including a roof tile plant (2,694 sq m); a concrete pavers plant (2,775 sq m); a dry mortar plant; a dry mortar bag store (2,406 sq m); an administration building (348 sq m); a weighbridge and weighbridge office (29 sq m); and 2 No. aggregate hoppers. Permission expired – Not commenced.	05/02/07
TA/70518	Permission granted by Meath County Council for amendments to the previously permitted development of the concrete products production facility (Planning Reg. Ref. No. TA/60581). Permission expired – Not commenced.	24/10/07
TA/800654	Permission granted by Meath County Council for an increase in the quantum and range of alternative fuels used in the cement manufacturing process to 95,000 tonnes per annum and to include the burning of Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) and waste shredded tyre chippings in the existing pre-heater and cement kiln.	30/05/08
TA/900603	Permission granted by Meath County Council for an extension to the existing limestone quarry over an area of approximately 52.45 hectares to provide a final overall extracted area of 77.25 hectares.	06/10/09
TA/100444	Permission granted by Meath County Council for an increase in the range of alternative fuels used in the cement manufacturing process. Specifically, the burning of up to 10,000 tonnes of Liquid Recovered Fuels per annum in the existing pre-heater and kiln. No built structures were required as part of the permission.	05/10/10
TA/120195	Permission granted by Meath County Council for the removal of the existing asphalt plant from its current location south of the existing limestone quarry on a site of c. 4.58 ha (permitted under Reg. Ref. 01/967) and its relocation to the north of the existing cement works on a site of c. 1.74 ha within the overall landholding of 269.625 ha. Permission expired – Not commenced.	01/10/12
TA/120328	Outline planning permission granted by Meath County Council for the construction of a two-storey data centre opposite the existing main entrance to Lagan Cement Plant. Full planning permission not sought.	04/10/12
TA/150677	Permission granted for the development will consist of an increase in the quantum of alternative fuels used from 95,000 tonnes to 105,000 tonnes per annum in the cement manufacturing process.	02/10/15
TA160840	Permission granted for the construction of an industrial building and related infrastructure for the purpose of providing an additional refinement process of the solid recovered fuel (SRF) currently used and authorised as an alternative fuel source in the cement manufacturing process as permitted under planning permission ref. TA/150677 & TA/800654.	27/10/16
TA161144	Permission granted for the continued use of asphalt plant & retention of various structures on-site.	31/01/17
TA181329	Permission granted for the establishment and operation of a construction and demolition (C&D) waste recovery facility for the importation, processing and recovery of road plannings and bituminous materials, within an overall application area of 1.3ha at the existing asphalt production facility.	26/02/19
211146	Permission granted for the construction of a seven-bay clinker store of approximately 2,103 sqm gross floor area and all ancillary site development works within an application area of 0.61 hectares	29/11/21

