

Derek

Daragh Cassells

From: Bord
Sent: Tuesday 29 April 2025 14:46
To: Appeals2
Subject: FW: ABP-321578-25
Attachments: 2025.04.29 GSI Submission.pdf

From: DECC Planning Notifications <PlanningNotifications@decc.gov.ie>
Sent: Tuesday 29 April 2025 14:33
To: Bord <bord@pleanala.ie>
Subject: ABP-321578-25

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To whom it may concern,

Please see attached a submission on behalf of Geological Survey Ireland (a division of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications) with regard to ABP-321578-25.

Please send an acknowledgment of receipt to PlanningNotifications@decc.gov.ie at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,
Luke Thompson

Luke Thompson, Administrative Officer
Planning Advisory Division

An Roinn Comhshaoil, Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

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An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin D01 V902

16 April 2025

Re: Application for substitute consent under Section 177E for rock quarry, Hempstown Commons Blessington, Co Kildare.
Your Ref: ABP-321578-25
Our Ref: 25/44

Dear Sir/Madam,

Geological Survey Ireland is the national earth science agency and is a division of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. We provide independent geological information and interpretation and gather various data for that purpose. Please see our [website](#) for data availability.

With reference to your letter received on the 18 March 2025, concerning the Application for substitute consent under Section 177E for rock quarry, Hempstown Commons Blessington, Co Kildare, we recommend using our various data sets when conducting the EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes for developments, plans and policies. For more detailed information on how to access this data please access 'Data and Maps' [Data & Maps \(gsi.ie\)](#) on our 'Geoscience for planning' webpage. Use of our data or maps should be attributed correctly (please refer to each individual dataset's metadata for correct attribution).

For specific data available for Environmental Assessment and Planning topics please follow this link [[Data by Environmental Assessment and Planning Topic \(gsi.ie\)](#)], where you will find our data arranged by environmental assessment topic as illustrated below:

Land and soils <i>Soil</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsoils (Quaternary Geology) Tellus Geochemistry Geotechnical <i>Geology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedrock Geophysics Bedrock & Quaternary 3D 	Water <i>Groundwater</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aquifers GW vulnerability, GWPSs (GWPPs) <i>Surface water</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tellus Geochemistry <i>Estuarine & marine waters</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine and coastal <i>Flooding</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GWClimate Karst 	Climate Change <i>Carbon accounting / Carbon balance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geothermal Carbon capture and storage <i>Climate change trends</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National coastal change assessment
Cultural Heritage <i>Archaeology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cherish <i>Underwater Archaeology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shipwrecks 	Material Assets <i>Built Services</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural resources (Minerals & Aggregates) Active quarries 	The Landscape <i>Landscape Appearance & Character</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physiographic units <i>Historical landscapes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic mines
Other Relevant Data		
<i>Natural (Geo) hazards</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landslide Susceptibility Mapping Groundwater flooding Coastal vulnerability Subsidence Radon 	<i>Natural heritage</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geoheritage (County Geological Sites) Dimension Stone/Stone Built Ireland 	

Geological Survey Ireland, Block 1, Booterstown Hall, Booterstown, Blackrock, Co Dublin, A94 N2R6

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Geoheritage

Geological Survey Ireland is in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage), to identify and select important geological and geomorphological sites throughout the country for designation as geological NHAs (Natural Heritage Areas). This is addressed by the Geoheritage Programme of Geological Survey Ireland, under 16 different geological themes, in which the minimum number of scientifically significant sites that best represent the theme are rigorously selected by a panel of theme experts.

County Geological Sites (CGSs), as adopted under the National Heritage Plan, include additional sites that may also be of national importance, but which were not selected as the very best examples for NHA designation. All geological heritage sites identified by Geological Survey Ireland are categorised as CGS pending any further NHA designation by NPWS. CGSs are now routinely included in County Development Plans and in the GIS of planning departments, to ensure the recognition and appropriate protection of geological heritage within the planning system. CGSs can be viewed online under the Geological Heritage tab on the online [Map Viewer](#).

The audit for Co. Kildare was carried out in 2005. The full report details can be found [here](#). **Our records show that the Quarry is a CGS.**

Slate Quarries, Co. Kildare (GR 299512, 218354), under IGH theme: IGH 4 Cambrian-Silurian. The Townland of Slate Quarries in east Kildare, near Blessington is notable for its Slate Quarries. Silurian slate formation (Slate Quarries Formation). Link to Site Report: [KE004](#).

As a working quarry, the listing as a County Geological Site has no implications for the normal operation of the quarry, subject to standard permissions and conditions under planning and environmental legislation. It would be desirable to consider retaining representative faces for geological purposes during aftercare and restoration plans instead of straight forward infill to original pre-quarrying topography.

The Geological Survey would request that the operator might assist our geological heritage goals with the following (and ideally this would be written into the restoration / closure plan) and be included as a condition of planning as deemed appropriate by the planning authority:

1. Allowing access to quarry faces by appropriate scientists (upon request and with due regards to Health and Safety requirements) during quarrying to check for scientifically significant new stratigraphies / relationships as they might become exposed and to establish if the quarry site is worthy of recognition post extraction and through aftercare/restoration planning.
2. If deemed appropriate in (1) above, leaving a representative section of the quarry face at the end of the quarry life or inclusion of information panels to promote the geology to the public or develop tourism or educational resources if appropriate depending on the future use of the site. Natural exposures are few, or deeply weathered, this measure would permit on-going improvement of geological knowledge of the subsurface.

We also encourage discussion on end-of-life plans for the quarry and would be happy to recommend ways to promote the geology to the public or develop tourism or educational resources if appropriate. Geological Survey Ireland would like to offer help with interpretative signs where interesting geological features have been exposed, if appropriate.

The Geoheritage Programme tries to promote a partnership between geological heritage and active quarrying, with such measures as those outlined in the 'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry', which can be downloaded [here](#). This document, written in association with Irish Concrete Federation, acts as a comprehensive guide in the sustainable extraction of natural resources while preserving the geological heritage of Ireland



An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications



Geological Survey
Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta
Ireland | Éireann

Other Comments

Should development go ahead, all other factors considered, Geological Survey Ireland would much appreciate a copy of reports detailing any site investigations carried out. The data would be redacted for confidentiality and added to Geological Survey Ireland's national database of site investigation boreholes, implemented to provide a better service to the civil engineering sector. Data can be sent to the Geological Mapping Unit, at <mailto:GeologicalMappingInfo@gsi.ie>.

If we can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me Clare Glanville, or my colleague Trish Smullen at GSIPlanning@gsi.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Clare Glanville
Senior Geologist
Geoheritage and Planning Programme
Geological Survey Ireland

Trish Smullen
Geologist
Geoheritage and Planning Programme
Geological Survey Ireland

The publicly available data referenced/presented here, should in no way be construed as Geological Survey Ireland support for or objection to the proposed development or plan. The data are made freely available to all and can be used as independent scientific data in assessments, plans or policies. It should be noted that in many cases these data are a baseline or starting point for further site specific assessments.