

7th February 2012

Stephen Larkin
Connemara Granite Teo
Ros an Mhíl
Baile na hAbhann
Co. Galway

RE: Section 261A Planning and Development Act 2000 – Control of Quarries

Dear Sir,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter on the 30th January 2012 in relation to quarry 83 in the townland of Sheannapheasteen, Co. Galway. Your submission or observation will be considered by the planning authority.

Yours faithfully,

Sinéad Dillon
Assistant Staff Officer
Planning & Sustainable Development Unit

Tracking No FTD110013727



Recipient

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER

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Celine Fitzmaurice

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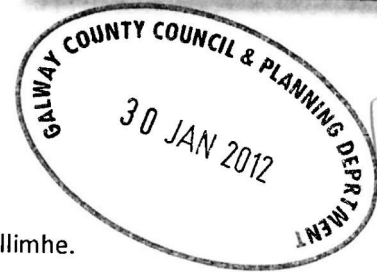
C. FITZMAURICE

54 0038

Ms Tara Quinn,
Executive Planner,
Control of Quarries Unit,
Galway County Council,
Áras an
Chontae, Prospect Hill,
Galway.

30 Eanáir 2012

Submission



Our Ref: QY 83 Stephen Larkin's Quarry at Seanaféistín, Casla, Co na Gaillimhe.

Re: Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, Section 261A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as inserted by Section 75 of the Planning & Development Act 2010) which deals with the Control of Quarries came into effect on 15th November, 2011

A Tara,

Further to our telephone conversation regards the above Quarry, I confirm that we submitted a planning application, ref: PL\10702 with Galway County Council and within that submission we supplied an appropriate assessment by Marie Louise Heffernan, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv, (attached)

Rusheenduff, Renvyle Co. Galway, 095 43090 / 086 8278031 and an environmental management Plan with positive inputs by Dr. Noel Kirby NPWS and Mr Kevin Rogers, Inland Fisheries Ireland.

When I registered my Quarry under section 261, QY83, our quarry was registered under the name Larkin Quarries Limited and I state that in fact QY84 is Larkin Quarries Ltd and ask that my Quarry QY83 be changed to, Connemara Granite Teo. I asked Galway County Council to amend this matter four years ago and state that my quarry has no relationship or association with QY 84 Larkin Quarries Ltd. whatsoever.

In relation to statutory bodies regarding this Act as described above, I have observed that at times when a quarry is deemed not to have the benefit of planning or is quarrying either without compliance with Revenue, the Environment or simply illegal, then no activities should be allowed to occur. An example is the expending of explosives in quarries where An Garda Síochána will supervise the expending of explosives even though the quarry does not have the statutory right to do so.

I ask that Statutory bodies put in place an agreement or memorandum of understanding that no activities be allowed until the statutory bodies agree in principle that such activity can be legally grounded.

I believe case law should support such a programme to enable bone fide Quarries to create and sustain viable employment and legitimate businesses.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Stephen Larkin

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Screening for Appropriate Assessment

10/702



Sheanmpheasteen,

Co. Galway



Marie Louise Heffernan, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv

Rusheenduff, Renvyle Co. Galway,

095 43090 / 086 8278031

www.aster.ie



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Summary

This screening, including ecological assessment and survey, found that this project is not significant in terms of its impact on the adjacent Natura 2000 site Connemara Bog Complex SAC (2034). This project "screens out" for appropriate assessment.



1.0 Introduction

1 Introduction

Aster has been commissioned by Qy 83, Connemara Granite Teo to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for a proposed development at Shanapheasteen Casla, Co. Galway

The assessment and associated report are being completed as part of the planning process for the proposed development. The assessment will be conducted in accordance with Schedule 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Assessment of Plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites).



1.2 Request for Further Information

Connemara Granite sought planning permission to build the following;

- Industrial Building for storage and dry cutting granite
- A building with office, canteen, toilet and changing rooms and car parking place.
- Wastewater treatment via a Kingspan Envirocare treatment system is proposed in conjunction with a raised percolation area.
- Bridge with weighing and washing arrangements, provision of a petrol interceptor as well as any related services proposed by the quarry, QY No83 (gross space Floor 299.15sqm)
- Proposed amendment to the entrance of existing access road.

In response to the request for further information from Galway County Council (see below) Aster was commissioned by Connemara Granite to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Report.

"The planning authority is concerned regarding the potential of the development to have adverse effects on the Connemara Bog Complex cSAC, which is a designated European site that forms part of Natura 2000 and which is protected under the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and the European Communities (natural Habitats Regulations 1997 (as amended)).

The proposed development site is bordered to the south and to the east by the Connemara Bog Complex cSAC. The southern boundary is a freshwater stream located within the cSAC, which flows into the Fermoy Lough/Glenicmurrin Lough System, all of which is located within the Connemara Bog Complex SAC, there is a risk that it may have a negative impact on the local freshwater ecology of the cSAC.

Therefore a full appropriate assessment is required and shall be undertaken in compliance with the Directive and regulations and in accordance with the relevant guidance outlined above. The assessment shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified person and shall be informed by an adequate level of ecological expertise. It is also advised to consult with the

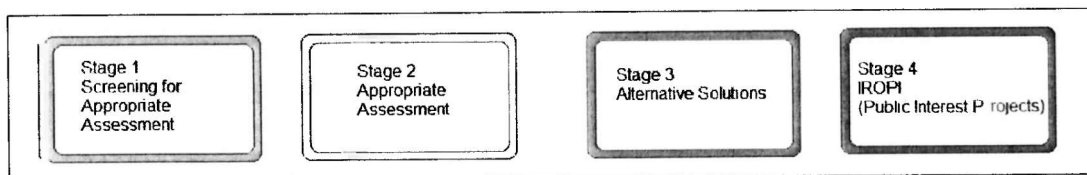
National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding the scope and contents of the assessment and to include any relevant information in the submitted documentation..."

1.3 Appropriate Assessment

The first step in the Appropriate Assessment process is screening to establish whether the project requires a full assessment.

An Appropriate Assessment may be required under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 6(3) Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Such assessments are required where it is identified that a proposed plan or project could have significant impact on a Natura 2000 site.

The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government guidelines (DOELHG, 2009) indicates the European Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2002) promoting a four-stage process to complete the AA, and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. The four stages are summarised diagrammatically in Figure 1 below, and an outline of the steps and procedures involved in completing each stage follows. This project is currently at Stage 1.



The screening will examine various aspects of the proposed project before deciding whether or not the project requires an appropriate assessment. The various aspects which will be addressed are as followings

- Project description
- Nature Conservation - SAC description
- Environmental information on proposed development site
- Cumulative impact – other projects and policies in the area
- Ecological impact of proposal



2.0 Project Description and Location

2.1 Description of Proposed Development and Associated Activities

Industrial Building.

This industrial building is planning to provide an indoor facility for storage and dry cutting granite. No solvents, lubricants or fuels will be stored in this facility. No water is to be used as the cutting is a dry cutting process. An indoor situation will enable better control of dust and fine particles generated.

A building with office, canteen, toilet and changing rooms and car parking place.

The aim is to provide improved conditions for the two employees as stone shaping and cutting could subsequently be carried out indoors and the canteen and office space would allow them facilities to eat and prepare paperwork in.

Bridge with weighing and washing arrangements

Weighbridge and wheel washing arrangements are required for contract purposes in the providing of stone products to consumers.

Proposed amendment to the entrance of existing access road.

The existing entrance is to be widened for safety reasons and to make a wider turning space for lorries

2.2 Description of Wastewater Treatment

The site is considered by EPA test results to be suitable for development and discharge to groundwater. Minimum separation distances from House Boundaries and watercourses are easily achievable. It is proposed to install a mechanical aeration unit and polishing filter. The aerated treatment system will be a Bord Agrément approved system from Envirocare. The polishing filter will consist of a raised percolation area, and the soil will be imported to create free draining percolation area 1.2m above ground level covering a minimum area of 240m²..



30 Designated Natura 2000 site Information

The proposed development site is located in close proximity to Connemara Bog Complex. Appropriate assessment is concerned with Natura 2000 sites at a European level. Details of Connemara Bog Complex SAC, including site characteristics, qualifying interest, potential pressures and threats and conservation objectives are set out in the following sections;

LTR-DATED _____ FROM _____
PL _____

31 Relationship to Designated Sites

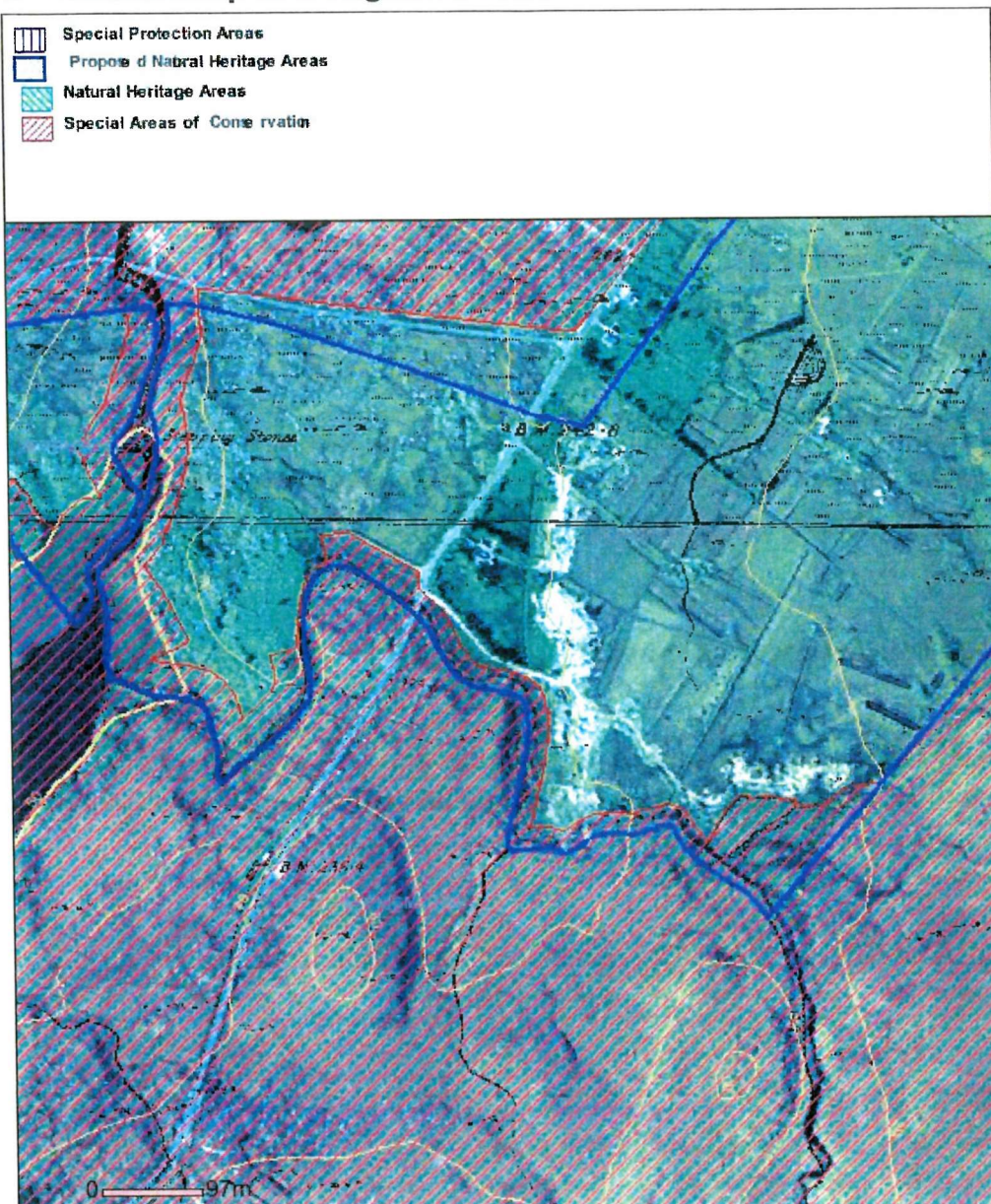
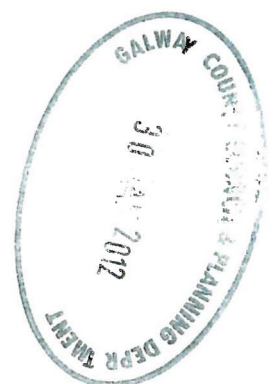


Photo 2: Proposed site relative to designated areas

(Source NPWS.ie Exclusions are outlined in blue).



3. Description of the Designated Sites

CONNEMARA BOG COMPLEX SITE CODE: 002034

The Connemara Bog Complex is a large site encompassing the majority of the south Connemara lowlands, Co. Galway. The site is bounded to the north by the Galway- Clifden road and stretches as far east as the Moycullen-Spiddal road.

The site is a candidate SAC selected for active blanket bog and lagoons, both priority habitats on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected as a candidate SAC for floating river vegetation, wet and dry heath, alkaline fen, transition mires, lowland oligotrophic lakes, dystrophic lakes, Rhynchosporion, old Oak woodlands, *Molinia* meadows and reefs, all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Atlantic Salmon, Otter, the plant Slender Naiad and the Marsh Fritillary butterfly. Nine legally protected plant species occur within this site (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

The site is of national importance for wintering populations of Greenland Whitefronted Geese. Small flocks (up to 30) are nowadays found on Roundstone Bog and also use the bogs between Recess and Maam Cross. There is an internationally important breeding area for Cormorants at Lough Scannive with 218 pairs present in 1985 in a colony which is known to have existed pre-1968. Golden Plover, a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, nests at up to four locations in the site, with a maximum of two pairs noted at any one location. Another Annex I species known to be present in the site is Merlin.

Lough Naskanniva is an important inland breeding site for Common Terns (up to 60 pairs in 1977 and 1992) and Choughs, both of which are also Annex I species under the EU Birds Directive.

Atlantic Salmon, listed under Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive occurs in many of the rivers within the site. The Cashla and Ballynahinch systems are good examples of western acidic spate rivers which support the species. Good spawning and nursery grounds for the species occur in these systems. Arctic Charr occurs in a number of lakes within the site: Ballynahinch Lake, Glenicmurrin Lough and Lough Shindilla. The species has also been reported from Lough Oorid and Lough Glendollagh in the past, but has not been recorded from these lakes in recent years. Arctic Charr is listed in the Irish Red Data Book as being threatened. Otter has been recorded as occurring in the Connemara Bog Complex.

3.3 Conservation Objectives for Connemara Bog Complex SAC

The integrity of a Natura 2000 site is determined based on the conservation status of the qualifying features of the SPA as set out above. Once each site has been designated, it is required that a management plan should be drawn up for the Natura 2000 site which sets out the objectives for the site in order to maintain the favourable conservation status of these



qualifying features and prevent in as far as possible threats and impacts on these habitats and species.

Conservation Objectives Connemara Bog Complex

Objective 1: To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status: Coastal lagoons; Reefs; Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*); Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds; Water courses of plain to mountain levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation; Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; European dry heaths; *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*); Blanket bog; Transition mires and quaking bogs; Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*; Alkaline fens; Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in British Isles.

Objective 2: To maintain the Annex II species for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status: Marsh Fritillary, Salmon; Otter; Slender Niaid.

Objective 3: To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site.

Objective 4: To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities

3.4 Consultation

The Conservation Ranger Aonghus O'Domhnaill of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) was contacted to source any additional information on the designated areas.

The project and scope was discussed with Kevin Rogers Senior Environmental Officer of the Inland Fisheries Ireland and Noel Kirby Regional Manager with NPWS.



4. Environmental Information

4.1 Ecological Features

4.1.1 Habitats

The habitats found on site where this proposed development is taking place are classified based on walkover surveys and an interpretation of the aerial photography. The habitats recorded are classified in accordance with the guidelines set out in 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000), which classifies habitats based on the vegetation present and management history. The habitats found within and adjacent to the proposed works are listed below

Active quarries and mines ED4

This category is used for all active rock or sediment quarries (including gravel pits) and mines, or parts of these, where levels of disturbance are so high that colonisation by plants and animals is almost entirely prevented. Piles of loose rock or sediment associated with mining or quarrying are included here where they are unstable and regularly disturbed.

Recolonising bare ground ED3

This category is used for any areas where bare or disturbed ground, derelict sites or artificial surfaces of tarmac, concrete or hard core have been invaded by herbaceous plants. In this case the recolonising bare ground is mainly being colonised by rushes (*Juncus* spp)

4.1.2 Flora and Fauna

The following information is sourced from published information and from the NPWS conservation ranger Aonghus O'Domhnaill

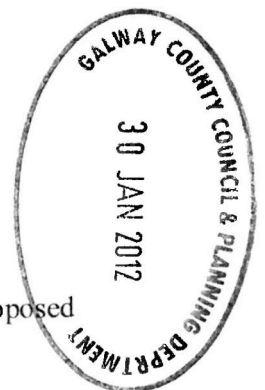
Flora

No plant species of importance are known from the 10sqkm within which this proposed development is sited.

Fauna

The general area is important for birds of conservation concern

- Greenland White-fronted Geese these are mainly concentrated further south at Tullynasheeog and Glenachmurach
- Red Grouse are present throughout the area in low concentrations.



- Merlin are known breeding in the general area

There are no concentrations of rare or important birds in the area surrounding the quarry.

The adjacent river is of key ecological importance. It is known to support populations of Salmon and trout. Otter are common in the area and would be expected to use this river system.

4.1.3 Significance of Ecological Findings

There are no concentrations of rare or important birds in the area surrounding the quarry. The main finding of significance is that protection of the adjacent river is paramount as it supports population of the Annex II species Salmon and Otter.

4.2 Hydrology and Water quality

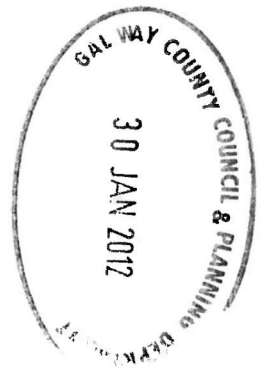
Hydrology/ water quality

The EPA does not monitor the adjacent river (www.EPA.ie). This river is an unnamed tributary of the Cashla River. It flows from Lough Aclogher south to Lough Charraig into Lough Fermoy which is a salmonid fishery.

Lough Fermoy is monitored by the EPA it was last sampled in 2003 and is classified as unpolluted or Oligotrophic. It is a recognised game fishery.

Flooding

A search of the Office of Public Works National Flood Hazard Mapping website, www.floodmaps.ie, was performed to obtain information on flooding history in the vicinity. No flooding events were recorded in the vicinity of the site.



2.0 Cumulative Impacts

As part of the screening for an Appropriate Assessment, as well as the proposed development, other relevant projects and plans in the region must also be considered. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant cumulative impacts of the proposed development with other such plans and projects on the Natura 2000 site.

A definition of Cumulative Impacts are impacts that result from a project when considered in conjunction with other projects/policies; be they past, present, as well as foreseeable future projects.

5.1 Local Authority Policy

The Galway County Council County Development Plan 2009-2013 is a key document as this helps shape current and future development in the area. This document sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the administrative area of Galway County Council, in accordance with the *Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006*. The Plan presents the Council's outlook for the future development of the County for the period up to 2015 and beyond.

The Plan, whilst addressing the planning authority's specific areas of responsibility such as Roads and Sanitary Services, Housing, Environmental Protection, Community and Social Infrastructure, Culture and Heritage, also sets out a longer term vision for the manner in which the County can be developed and its environment protected and enhanced, employing the principles of sustainable development and social partnership.

Galway County Council - Policies relevant to this application

Quarries

Galway County Council specifically refer to the following guidelines in respect of quarries. **Guidelines;** Compliance with the provisions and guidance, as appropriate, contained within Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the DoEHLG *Quarries and Ancillary Facilities Guidelines 2004* and the *EPA Guidelines for Environmental Management in the Extractive Sector 2006*.

Designated Sites, Habitats and Species Policies

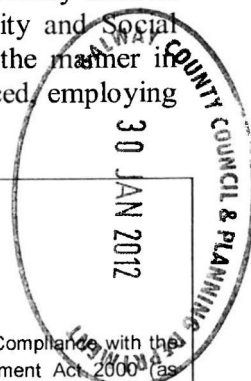
Policy HL31: It is the policy of the Council to implement Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive, and to subject any plan (including County Development Plan, Local Area Plans) or project likely to impact Natura 2000 or European Sites (SACs, SPAs), whether directly (in situ), indirectly (ex-situ) or in combination with other plans or projects, to an Appropriate Assessment in order to inform decision making. A plan or project may only be authorised after the competent authority has made certain, based on scientific knowledge, that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site; in the case of derogations, authorisation must be pursued under Article 6(4).

Policy HL32: It shall be the policy of Galway County Council to ensure that development in Galway and the provision of services take into account the relevant Management Plans (if any) for SACs and SPAs in the county.

Policy HL33: Have regard to any impacts developments may have on or near existing and proposed, Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Connemara National Park and any other designated sites including any future designations.

Policy HL34: Consult the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to proposed developments adjoining designated conservation sites.

Policy HL35: Protect and conserve habitats and Species designated under the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Wildlife Act, Flora Protection Order, National Nature Reserves, Connemara National Park, Ramsar Sites and any other Directives, Acts or



Policies which may be issued during the lifetime of this Plan. Designated Sites, Habitats and Species Objectives

Objective HL22: Promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, while allowing for appropriate development, access and recreational activity.

Objective HL24: It is an objective to provide protection to all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation in accordance with National and European legislation. This includes Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves and Ramsar sites.

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policies

Policy HL43: The Local Authority shall seek comply with the Habitats Directive and Natura 2000 recommendations, including the protection of fisheries habitats.

Policy HL44: The local authority shall seek to protect fisheries habitats, in particular those listed in the Annexes of the Habitats Directive and specifically for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel and the White Clawed Crayfish. The avoidance of development in areas where flood risk has been identified shall be the primary response of the Planning Authority. Development proposals which include proposals for mitigation and management of flood risk will only be considered where avoidance is not possible and where development can be clearly justified with the Guidelines Justification Test.

Policy HL45: No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects)

Policy HL46: All subsequent plan-making and adoption of plans under the control of Galway County Council arising from this plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Policy HL47: Galway County Council will set up procedures to ensure that any plan, project, etc would take cognisance of the existing impacts on Natura 2000 sites and assess the cumulative and "in combination" effects that said plans and projects may have on any Natura 2000 site and to ensure compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Policy HL48: No ecological networks or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity are to be lost without remediation as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan.

Policy HL49: Galway County Council shall protect wetlands, and associated surface and groundwater systems within the Plan area.

Policy HL50: Galway County Council shall ensure that, in the supply of services and in zoning of lands and authorisation of development, the threatened habitats and species* which occur within and adjoining the Plan area are not placed under further risk of deterioration (habitats) or reduction in population size (species). *As identified in the National Parks and Wildlife "The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland", (NPWS, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008). Galway County Council shall ensure that plan formulation and development control shall take into account the relevant "Major Pressures reported in the assessment of Habitats and Species" and the "Main Objectives Over The Coming Five Years and Beyond" contained in the above publication. Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Objectives

Policy HL54: Seek to have protected rivers, streams and other watercourses and, wherever possible, maintain them in an open state capable of providing suitable habitat for fauna and flora.

Policy HL55: Seek to have protected and to enhance the natural heritage and landscape character of river and stream corridors (together with immediate floodplains and valleys of streams and smaller rivers) to maintain them free from inappropriate development, and to provide for public access where feasible and appropriate.

Natural Water Systems Policies

Policy HL71: Implement water protection measures to prevent any deterioration of "good status" waters, and to restore substandard waters to „good status.

Policy HL73: Introduce a comprehensive and integrated approach to the management of our natural water resources.

Policy HL74: Intensify public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect natural water bodies.

Policy HL79: Ensure that all new treatment systems...comply with the relevant EPA wastewater manuals.



Other Authorities**Projects and Plans****National Parks and Wildlife Service**

A Conservation Management Plan for Connemara Bog Complex SAC have not yet been published by the NPWS.

Water Framework Directive

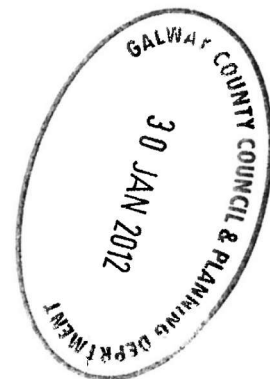
Under the Water Framework Directive the West Galway Water Management Unit Action Plan was published in March 2010.

5.2 Local Projects – Planned or Existing

Along with the policies and objectives planned for the area by the local authority and various public bodies also to be considered are actual projects which have been approved of for the general area. This particular area appears attracted considerable windfarm development as within 6 km of the site there are various wind farms planned.

Planning Reference 10303	Finnaun Townland - Planning permission has been granted to Coillte for a 22 Turbine windfarm.
Planning Reference 101434	Ugool Townland - Planning permission has been granted to Comhlacht Gaoithe Teoranta for 20 wind turbines.
Planning Reference 101454	Lettercafrone townland - an application for planning permission by SSE Renewables is in progress for 8 turbines.

Other projects in the general area include housing and it is worth also noting that there is a small quarry to the north east of this site (c200m) which is currently operational.



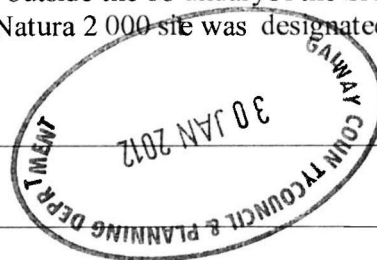
6.0 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

6.1 Screening Checklist

Having outlined the proposed project and the details of the Natura 2000 sites, a screening assessment for possible impacts can be generated.

This section follows the format of the Screening Matrix provided in Annex 2 of the following document; "Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites- Methodology guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission, 2001".

<p>Direct Ecological Impacts</p>
<p>Size and Scale The proposed development is not located within the Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>Land-Take There will be no loss of land from the Natura 2000 site as a result of this development.</p> <p>Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site The proposed development site is located adjacent to but outside the boundary of the SAC. None of the qualifying habitats of species for which the Natura 2000 site was designated are found within the proposed development site.</p>
<p>Indirect Ecological Impacts</p>
<p>Water The most significant issue from an ecological perspective is protection of water quality. Risks to water quality are as follows;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wastewater treatment The wastewater treatment system has been carefully designed by the wastewater treatment experts in line with EPA guidelines to ensure that no water pollution will result from this development. This treatment takes place over 70m from the river boundary. 2. Construction of New Buildings The construction phase will result in potentially increased surface area for run off into the river. This however can be prevented largely by good on site management and ongoing water control. The current system of diverting water to a collection area and pumping it to a natural soakaway area where the silt is removed is considered adequate to prevent pollution of the river. 3. Dirt from Wheels and Fuel spills No fuel is to be stored on site. Wheels are to be washed in a wheel wash to be provided. All dirty water to be collected in one area filtered through a petrol interceptor and put out on the



isting soakaway thus removing any silt from the water (see accompanying management plan).

4. The repositioning of the entrance under this planning application will result it being located a further distance from the river than it currently is. This will require good on site management during construction in order to protect the river but should have long terms benefits in terms of water quality.

The impact on the SAC river quality from this development in itself is not considered significant. The existing quarry has a much larger potential to impact on the river than the proposed development. The key aspect is the management of the quarry itself in terms of water movement and restoration of quarried areas. It is proposed to prepare a management plan to reduce impact of the quarry on the river both in the short term and by revegetating open areas to enable long term stabilisation of quarry spoil (see accompanying management plan).

Resource Requirements and Emissions

The proposed development will not have a significant impact (direct, indirect or secondary in nature) on the designated site in this regard. Volumes of stone cut and traffic servicing the site will not change as a result of this planning. The quarry is already fully operational.

Describe any likely changes arising as a result of the following;

Reduction of Habitat

There will be no changes in this respect as the planning permission will not directly impact on the SAC and the habitat affected is classified mainly as active quarry.

Disturbance to Key Species

No disturbance is anticipated to key species.

Habitat or Species Fragmentation

There will be no changes in this respect.

Reduction in species density

No change is anticipated

Changes in key indicators of conservation value

The key area of conservation is the river. Annex II species Salmon and Otter are known from the river. These species still are present in the river despite the existence of the quarry at this location since the 1930's. No change in these key conservation indicators are expected as a result of the proposed development.



Cumulative assessment

No undeveloped areas are being opened up for development as a result of this proposal. Another quarry is operating to the north west of this quarry. This proposal is not an application licence for quarrying and there will be no cumulative impact from the development as proposed.

Indicators of Significance**Loss**

No loss is expected

Fragmentation

No fragmentation is expected. The building is proposed within an industrial quarry area.

Disturbance

No disturbance to key species or habitats is expected

Change to key elements of the site

There will be no changes in this respect.

7.0 Recommendations

- Any soil that is imported on site e.g. for the percolation area, must be free of invasive species i.e. Gunnera, Rhododendron and Japanese knotweed.
- Continue to manage silt laden water on site (see management plan)
- Prevent run off from the quarry entering the river in the long term (see management plan)

8.0 Conclusion

The project as proposed screens out for appropriate assessment but it raises many issues regarding current practice and management within the quarry itself in terms of impact on the river. Long term solutions to water management and run off have been identified and documented in the environmental management plan for the site which accompanies this document.



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Appendix 1: SAC SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE SYNOPSIS SITE NAME: CONNEMARA BOG COMPLEX SITE CODE: 002034 The Connemara Bog Complex is a large site encompassing the majority of the south Connemara lowlands, Co. Galway. The site is bounded to the north by the Galway- Clifden road and stretches as far east as the Moycullen-Spiddal road.

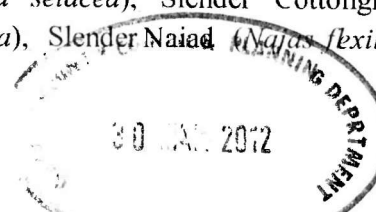
Because of its large size the site contains a wide range of habitats. Extensive tracts of western blanket bog form the core interest, but there are also areas of heath, woodland, lakes, rivers and streams. The Connemara Bog Complex is underlain predominantly by various Galway granites, with small areas along the northern boundary of Lakes Marble, schist and gneiss.

The Roundstone bog area has a diverse bedrock geology composed mainly of the basic intrusive rock, gabbro. An area of rock, possibly Cambrian in age, called the Delaney Dome Formation occurs in the north-west of this area. Gabbro also occurs in the Kilkieran peninsula and near Cashel. The whole area was glaciated in the last Ice Age which scoured the lowlands of Connemara. The site is a candidate SAC selected for active blanket bog and lagoons, both priority habitats on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The site is also selected as a candidate SAC for floating river vegetation, wet and dry heath, alkaline fen, transition mires, lowland oligotrophic lakes, dystrophic lakes, Rhynchosporion, old Oak woodlands, *Molinia* meadows and reefs, all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Atlantic Salmon, Otter, the plant Slender Naiad and the Marsh Fritillary butterfly. The main habitat within this site is lowland Atlantic blanket bog. Most of the area is covered by blanket peat greater than one metre in depth.

The Connemara Bog Complex is characterized by areas of deeper peat surrounded by rocky granite outcrops, covered by heath vegetation. The deeper peat areas are often covered by lakes and river systems. A mosaic of different communities therefore exists. These include, hummock/hollow systems, inter-connecting pools, Atlantic blanket bog pools, flushes, transition and quaking mires, freshwater marshes, lakeshore, lake and river systems. The key plant species of lowland blanket bog are Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and Bog Moss (*Sphagnum*) species. Small patches of deciduous woodland and a large number of oligotrophic lakes add to the habitat diversity of the site.

Also occurring within the site are several lagoons (a type of brackish lake) which display considerable variations in size, depth and salinity, resulting in a diverse assemblage of floral and faunal communities. Nine legally protected plant species occur within this site (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999): Forked Spleenwort (*Asplenium septentrionale*), Parsley Fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*), Bog Hair-grass (*Deschampsia setacea*), Slender Cottongrass (*Eriophorum gracile*), Bog Orchid (*Hammarhya paludosa*), Slender Naiad (*Najas flexilis*),



Heath Cudweed (*Omalotheca sylvatica*), Pillwort (*Pilularia globulifera*) and Pale Dog-violet (*Viola lactea*). The rare and threatened species, Dorset Heath (*Erica ciliaris*), Mackay's Heath (*Erica mackaiana*) and Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) also occur within this site. All the above species are listed in the Irish Red Data Book and Slender Naiad is listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

The site is of national importance for wintering populations of Greenland Whitefronted Geese. Small flocks (up to 30) are nowadays found on Roundstone Bog and also use the bogs between Recess and Maam Cross. In April 1989 a synchronised ground and air census of the Connemara bogs located 7 flocks of White-fronts, totalling 134-137 birds. In 1991/93 wintering numbers were considered to be not much more than 60 birds. There is an internationally important breeding area for Cormorants at Lough Scannive with 218 pairs present in 1985 in a colony which is known to have existed pre-1968. Golden Plover, a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, nests at up to four locations in the site, with a maximum of two pairs noted at any one location. Another Annex I species known to be present in the site is Merlin. Lough Naskanniva is an important inland breeding site for Common Terns (up to 60 pairs in 1977 and 1992) and Choughs, both of which are also Annex I species under the EU Birds Directive.

Atlantic Salmon, listed under Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive occurs in many of the rivers within the site. The Cashla and Ballynahinch systems are good examples of western acidic spate rivers which support the species. Good spawning and nursery grounds for the species occur in these systems. Arctic Charr occurs in a number of lakes within the site: Ballynahinch Lake, Glenicmurrin Lough and Lough Shindilla. The species has also been reported from Lough Oorid and Lough Glendollagh in the past, but has not been recorded from these lakes in recent years. Arctic Charr is listed in the Irish Red Data Book as being threatened. Otter has been recorded as occurring in the Connemara Bog Complex. Irish Hare, another mammal listed in the Red Data Book, occurs on the site. Common Frog breeds on the site. It is listed in the Irish Red Data Book as internationally important and on Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive.

The main damaging operations and threats in the Connemara Bog Complex are peatcutting, overgrazing and afforestation. Extensive peat extraction using 'Difco' machines has become common in the region in recent years and cutting by excavator and hopper is also increasing. The handcutting of peat is less threatening as it is usually on a much smaller scale but it still needs to be controlled within the site. Afforestation also threatens the site. Forestry affects habitat uniformity, lake and river catchments, nesting and feeding habitats for animals, and landscape integrity. Overgrazing and poaching by sheep and cattle is a widespread problem within the site, with erosion of peat ensuing. The above operations are the most extensive but other threats and potentially damaging operations include land drainage and reclamation, fertilization, quarrying and dumping.



In summary, the Connemara Bog Complex encompasses a large area of relatively undrained lowland Atlantic blanket bog of high conservation significance to Ireland as well as Europe. The site has nine protected and threatened Irish Red Data Book plant species. The site is internationally important for Cormorants and nationally important for Greenland White-fronted Geese and contains nesting sites for Golden Plover. The site supports several bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and a range of plant and animal species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. 13.12.2005

