CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

JUNE 2025

QUARRY CONSULTING

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mortimer Quarries Ltd. (the applicant) is proposing the continuation of use of an existing permitted limestone quarry (granted under 06/2275 and PL07.222783), along with the continuation of use of the associated asphalt manufacturing and concrete manufacturing facilities and the provision of a storage yard, at Cartron, Belclare, Co. Galway. The application is for a total period of 35 years, an operational period of 33 years followed by 2 years for completion of restoration.

1.2 This EIAR (Environmental Impact Assessment Report) is provided in accordance with the EU EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by EIA Directive 2014/52/EU and the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, in order to inform the consideration of the Application and provide the planning authority with the environmental Information that must be taken into account when determining the Application. All the land required for the Proposed Development (included within the Application site boundary) is referred to in this EIAR as 'the Site'. The Proposed Development is entirely within the administrative boundary of Galway County Council (GCC) and the EIAR is being provided to GCC as part of a planning application seeking full planning permission.

1.3 This EIAR has been prepared by Quarry Consulting, with the support of other consultancy advisors. A list of the main contributors to this EIAR is provided in Table 1.2 below.

1.4 Key areas of information presented within this EIAR concern the nature and extent of the Proposed Development, the character of the receiving environment and likely interactions between the two that could result in significant environmental impacts. Information presented on the receiving environment identifies the intrinsic value and importance of potential impact receptors.

The Applicant

1.5 Mortimer Quarries Ltd is a family-owned company with over 60 years of experience in Ireland's quarrying industry. Founded in the early 1960s by Frank Mortimer, the company began as a modest sand and gravel operation in County Galway. Increasing demand led to expansion in the 1980s with the acquisition of its first hard rock quarry, allowing for diversification of products and services.

1.6 The operational headquarters is located at a fully authorised, high-purity limestone quarry in Belclare, Tuam, County Galway. The company offers a comprehensive range of products, including ready-mix concrete, natural guillotine-cut building stone, armour rock, aggregates, and stone fill materials. Under the trade name Grolime, it supplies agricultural ground limestone to meet the needs of the agricultural sector.

1.7 Demonstrating a commitment to environmental responsibility, Mortimer Quarries also operates a Construction and Demolition Facility authorised to accept specific types of construction waste.

1.8 Breedon Group operates an asphalt plant on the Mortimer Quarries site, expanding the range of services available at this location.

The Application Site

1.9 The existing quarry site is located in the townland of Cartron, Belcare, Co. Galway, situated approximately 5.6km south-west of Tuam and 10km north-east of Headford, while Galway is 20km south of the site.

1.10 The site is located to the south of the R333 and north of the L2212 from which access is provided via an unnamed local road approximately 600m in length. In the vicinity of the site the L2212

comprises an unmarked single carriage road with an 80km/hr speed limit. The L2212 joins the R333 at a T-junction approximately 1.5km north-east of the site.

1.11 The application site is comprised of an existing operational quarry, which is broadly L-shaped, with an extraction area of 15.09 ha and a total site area of approximately 16.3 ha. The site is bounded to the south-west by a minor road, to the south-east by agricultural land, to the north-west by an area of woodland and to the north-east by a neighbouring quarry formerly operated by a third party (currently closed).

1.12 Beyond the site, the landscape is rural in character, consisting of predominately agricultural land enclosed with stone walls, with patches of bog, scrubland and woodland, most notable Knockma Wood immediately west of the site.

1.13 There are no properties within 400m of the extraction area, the nearest properties comprise a detached farm house approximately 590m to the north of the site and a series of dwellings on the L2212 south-west of the site. There are approximately 56 dwellings within 1km of the quarry. The closest settlement to the site is the village of Belclare, which is situated approximately 1.2km north of the site.

1.14 There are no surface water features in the immediate vicinity of the site, the nearest water course comprises the Glennafosha, stream, approximately 3km east of the site The Glennafosha stream is a tributary of Clare River.

1.15 The site is situated between the 60m and 90m contour lines, with higher ground immediately west of the application site, at Knockmaa (167m above Ordnance Datum (OD)) and to the north-east at Knockacarrigeen (110m above OD). Other than these highpoints, the landscape is broad and open, with expansive views available from the higher points

1.16 Mortimer Quarries Ltd. owns the site where the proposed development will take place.

Previous Planning Application

1.17 The following historic planning applications relate to the application site:

- 21442: Provision of a steel frame and cladding to cover existing aggregate stock bays for environmental purposed.2. the provision of a steel frame and cladding around the existing fixed plant (including lime crusher) for environmental purposed. the proposed development is ancillary to the main quarry which was previously approved under planning reference 06/2275 and An Bord Pleanála reference PL.07.222783. Conditional 17/05/2021
- 20419: for the construction of a Concrete Batching Plant on and adjacent to a Quarry site previously approved under Planning Reference 06/2275 and An Bord Pleanála Reference PL.07.222783. The proposed development is ancillary to the main Quarry and it will include the following; Washdown/Surface Water Collection System and Washwater Recovery Tanks. Concrete Block Making and Storage Facility and all Associated Ancillary Site Services. The Planning Application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). Conditional 08/07/2020. Appealed 04/08/202. Approved 08/02/2021.
- 191964: for development consisting of the installation of a substation building comprising of an ESB supply room and 2 no. switch rooms (c. 70 sq.m) within a planning application area of c.0.007 Ha. Gross floor space of proposed works: 70 sqm. Granted (Conditional) 30/03/2020.
- 177083: To construct a concrete batching plant on and adjacent to a quarry site previously approved under planning reference 06/2275 and An Bord Pleanála reference PL.07.222783. The proposed development is ancillary to the main quarry and it will include the following: washdown/surface water collection system and washwater recovery tanks;

aggregate storage bins; concrete block-making and storage facilities and all ancillary services. Conditional 20/07/2017.

- 17512: For the removal of an existing office and staff facilities building and the replacement of same with a single storey prefabricated modular building (to be used for staff facilities building) and for the provision of a staff and visitors carpark to serve the existing quarry. The development will connect to the existing treatment plant constructed under quarry planning references 06/2275 (An Bord Pleanála reference PL.07.222783). Gross floor space of proposed work: 173.1sqm). Conditional 12/06/2017.
- 15104: for the construction of an Asphalt Batching Plant within the quarry site previously approved under planning reference 06/2275 and An Bord Pleanála reference PL.07.222783. The proposed development will be ancillary to the main quarry and it will provide the following: 2 weigh bridges and associated single storey weigh station office, 1 single bay open aggregate bay, 1 five-bay open aggregate bay and 1 three-bay covered aggregate storage bay. The asphalt plant will consist of all fixed and mobile plant-associated with the following system; cold feed system, drying and heating system, dust collection system, mixing tower, hot mix storage system, filter feed system, bitumen supply system and a control cabin. There will be a 30.0m high stack associated with the plant. The plant will be located on the existing quarry floor level. There will also be advanced warning signs on the public access road (gross floor space 8sqm). Conditional 01/04/2015.
- 141295: For the construction of a shed within the existing quarry site for the purpose of maintaining plant associated with the operation of the quarry. The development will also consist of the provision of a concrete apron around the proposed shed, incorporating a surface water collection system and an oil interceptor. Previous planning reference 06/2275 and 06/2275 An Bord Pleanála reference PL.07.222783 refer to the quarry. Gross floor space 263.4sqm. Conditional 29/01/2015
- 06/2275: Required un S261(7) for continued quarrying of pre-1963 limestone quarry. Conditional 22/03/2007. Appealed (An Bord Pleanála reference PL.07.222783) 10/04/2007. Approved 7/05/2008.

The Proposed Development

Operational Phase (Extraction and Processing)

1.18 The proposed development being applied for under this current planning application is shown on Figure 3.1 and will consist of:

- Continued use of the existing quarry (granted under Planning Ref. File No.: 06/2275 and ABP Ref.: PL07.222783), including drilling, blasting, crushing, processing, and stockpiling of materials within a total site area of 15.09 hectares to the permitted depth of 33m OD.
- Continued use of existing permitted structures and facilities, including:
  - Weighbridge and wheelwash with side and overhead spray bars.
  - Office and staff facilities building and carpark provision (Ref. 17512).
  - Asphalt plant (Ref. 15104), concrete batching plant (Ref. 20419), maintenance shed (Ref. 141295), aggregate shed, ESB substation (Ref. 191964), crushing and screening plant, and stock bays (Ref. 062275 & 21442).
  - Associated site infrastructure.
- Construction of a new quarry storage yard (c. 1.09 Ha.) to the east of the existing quarry.

- Relocation of the existing permitted sheds (Plan Ref File No. 21442) to an area beside the proposed storage yard area.
- Importation of soil and stone (both waste and non-waste) for site restoration purposes and selected construction and demolition waste for recycling to preserve natural aggregate resources, subject to the necessary authorisations.
- The proposed development will facilitate the continued operation and restoration of the site, with the operational life of the quarry ceasing upon resource exhaustion, followed by completion of restoration to agricultural and natural uses using imported material.

1.19 The proposed development is within an overall application area of c. 16.3 hectares and is for a total period of 35 years (comprising an operational period of 33 years followed by 2 years for completion of restoration). The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

1.20 Aggregate extracted from the application area will be processed using both semi static and mobile crushing and screening plant within the quarry void – refer to Figure 3.1. Processed rock will be stored in the existing permitted quarry area pending use in the ancillary manufacturing plants (asphalt, block, concrete) on site or sale off site.

Restoration (Reinstatement to Nature Conservation Habitat Areas)

1.21 Upon the cessation of extraction operations, it is proposed to return the worked lands to agricultural & natural habitat after-uses – refer to EIAR Chapter 3, Figure 3.2 and Chapter 5: Biodiversity.

1.22 Where feasible, restoration of exhausted and redundant areas will be carried out at the earliest opportunity. However, it is envisaged that the majority of the restoration proposals will be carried out after extraction operations at the site have ceased.

Need for an EIAR

1.23 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process undertaken for certain types of development. It provides a means of drawing together the findings from a systematic analysis of the likely significant environmental effects of a scheme to assist local planning authorities, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders in their understanding of the impacts arising from the development.

1.24 The European Union's 1985 EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) was amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC, and the Directive and its amendments were codified in 2011 by Directive 2011/92/EU.

1.25 The current Directive 2014/52/EU amends the 2011 codified Directive but does not replace it. This amending Directive was transposed into national planning consent procedures in September 2018 through the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018).

1.26 The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (currently the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) published the following in the draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála in relation to carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, (August 2018):

> *'The objective of Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, is to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for environmental impact assessment (EIA), prior to development consent being given, of public and private developments that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.'*

1.27 The amended EIA Directive prescribes a range of environmental factors which are used to organise descriptions of the environment and these factors must be addressed in the EIAR. Article 3(1) of the amended Directive states that:

The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of a project on the following factors:

a) population and human health;

b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;

c) land, soil, water, air and climate;

d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape;

e) the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a) to (d).

EIA is mandatory for certain types of projects and for other projects that meet or exceed thresholds as set out in Annexes I and II of the Directive (and Part 1 and Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended).

1.28 For certain projects, and for others meeting or exceeding the thresholds outlined in Annexes I and II of the Directive (and Part 1 and Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended), an EIA is obligatory.

1.29 Paragraph 19 of Part 1 of Schedule 5 states that the following form of development requires an EIA

"Quarries and open-cast mining where the surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares.

1.30 Paragraph 22 relates to changes or extensions. It states:

"Any change or extension of projects listed in this Annex where such a change or extension in itself meets the thresholds, if any set out in this Annex."

1.31 Paragraph 2 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 refers to extractive industry and part (b) of that section states that the following requires an EIA:

"Extraction of stone, gravel, sand or clay, where the area of extraction would be greater than 5 hectares."

1.32 In addition, paragraph 13(a) of Part 1 requires EIA in respect of:

"Any change or extension of development already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed (not being a change or extension refer to in Part 1) which would:-

i. result in the development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule and

ii. result in an increase in size greater than –

25 per cent, or

an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold,

whichever is the greater.

1.33 The proposed development relates to the continuation of use of an existing permitted quarry within a site area of 16.3 and extraction area of 15.09 ha.

1.34 The extraction area of the quarry is greater than 5 hectares. On this basis the extraction area of the quarry exceeds the area stated under Part 2 and an EIAR is required.

EIAR Document and Chapter Structure

1.35 The findings of the EIA are set out in this EIAR and comprise the following chapters as presented in Table 1.1. The methodology used within the EIAR is outlined in Chapter 2.0 (Scoping and Methodology). The responsible parties examining the respective topic areas have also been provided in Table 1.2. The EIAR was completed by a project team led by Quarry Consulting, who also prepared a number of the chapters.

1.36 A Non-Technical Summary (NTS) accompanies the EIAR and provides a summary of the key findings of the EIA in non-technical language.

Table 1-1: EIAR Chapter Structure

EIAR Chapter	Chapter Title	Responsibility
1.0	Introduction	Quarry Consulting
2.0	Scope & Methodology	Quarry Consulting
3.0	Project Description	Quarry Consulting
4.0	Alternatives	Quarry Consulting
5.0	Population & Human Health	Quarry Consulting
6.0	Biodiversity	Green and Blue Ecology
7.0	Land, Soils & Geology	Hydro-G
8.0	Water	Hydro-G
9.0	Climate	Quarry Consulting
10.0	Air Quality	Quarry Consulting
11.0	Noise & Vibration	Sine Environmental
12.0	Visual & Landscape	Quarry Consulting
13.0	Traffic	PMCE
14.0	Heritage	Dr. Charles Mount
15.0	Material Assets	Quarry Consulting
16.0	Interactions	Quarry Consulting
17.0	Mitigation & Monitoring	Quarry Consulting

EIA Project Team

1.37 The members of the team and their respective inputs are presented in Table 1.2. In accordance with EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, we confirm that lead specialists involved in the preparation of the EIAR are fully qualified and competent in their respective field. Each has extensive proven expertise in the relevant field concerned, thus ensuring that the information provided herein is complete and of high quality.

Table 1-2: EIA Project Team

Discipline	Specialist	Qualifications	Accreditations	Years of Professional Experience
Introduction; Scope and Methodology; Project Description; Alternatives; Climate; Air Quality; Interactions.	Peter Kinghan (Quarry Consulting)	Geo-Surveying (Diploma) Mineral Surveying and Resource Management (BSc Hons) Environmental Engineering (Post Graduate Diploma) Geographic Information Systems (Certificate) Business Management (MSc) Environmental Sustainability (Certificate)	Member of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland Member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors UK	24
Alternatives; Population and Human Health; Climate; Air Quality.	Rory Brickenden (Quarry Consulting)	Geoscience (BA Hons) Water, Waste & Environmental Engineering (MEngSc)		2
Population and Human Health; Landscape & Visual; Material Assets; Planning Statement	Irene Curran (Quarry Consulting)	Environmental Science (BSc Hons) Town and Country Planning (MSc Dist) Field Ecology (Diploma)	Chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute	20

Discipline	Specialist	Qualifications	Accreditations	Years of Professional Experience
Biodiversity	Steve Judge (Blue and Green Ecology)	Countryside Management / Environmental Management and Monitoring (BSc Hons)	Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	20
Land, Soils and Geology; Hydrology and Hydrogeology	Dr. Pamela Bartley (Hydro-G)	Certificate in Civil Engineering in Letterkenny RTC Diploma in Water and Wastewater Engineering Bachelor of Engineering degree MSc. in Environmental Engineering Ph.D	Engineers Ireland and the International Association of Hydrogeologists (Irish Group)	20+
Noise and Vibration	Sam Williams (Sine Environmental)	BEng (Hons)	Member of the Institute of Acoustics	27+
Traffic	Aly Gleeson (PMCE Consultants)	BSc Masters Civil Engineering	Chartered Member of Engineers Ireland	20
Heritage	Charles Mount (Dr. Charles Mount Archaeology and Cultural Heritage)	M.A. Archaeology Ph.D. Archaeology Dip. EIA & SEA Management	MIAI Member of the Discovery Programme	25+

Description of EIAR Study Team's Background and Experience

Quarry Consulting

1.38 Quarry Consulting is an environmental consultancy that includes in their team a Chartered Mineral Surveyor, Chartered Geomatics Surveyor, Geo-Scientist, Chartered Town Planner & Ecologist. The team have extensive experience in project managing planning applications and coordinating Environmental Impact Assessments for a range of energy, extractive and waste related developments.

Green and Blue Ecology

1.39 Steve Judge is a professional ecologist with 20 years experience in environmental and ecological consultancy working for a large number of clients from both the private and public sectors throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. Projects include: industrial and housing development, mining and minerals, waste management, flood defence, energy and renewables.

1.40 Highly experienced in undertaking Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), Appropriate Assessments (Stage 1 and Stage 2), habitat and species surveys, and in the design and implementation of ecological mitigation strategies for a wide range of habitats and species.

1.41 Specialist in Ecology of freshwater systems that includes experience of eco-hydrology, wetland creation, biological water quality assessments, water level management plans and condition assessments of riparian features and structures.

Hydro-G: Specialists in Hydrogeological and Environmental Services

1.42 Hydro-G is a leading consultancy specialising in hydrogeology, groundwater management, and environmental engineering. With a focus on providing sustainable water management solutions, Hydro-G has extensive experience in conducting groundwater assessments, hydrogeological risk evaluations, and designing effective water management systems for various projects, including those in the extractive and construction industries. Their expertise ensures that all groundwater-related aspects of the project are thoroughly evaluated and managed, minimising environmental impacts while ensuring regulatory compliance.

Sam Williams (Sine Environmental)

1.43 Sam Williams has provided advice in the related fields of noise and vibration for over 25 years, and has managed acoustics teams for several of the worlds largest multi-disciplinary engineering consultancies. Over time he has come to specialise on major infrastructure projects.

PMCE

1.44 PMCE is an engineering consultancy which focuses on providing expert independent engineering advice in relation to Road Safety Engineering (Road Safety Audits, Historical Collision Analysis and Road Safety Inspections), Road Planning & Design and Traffic Analysis & Assessment. PMCE has extensive experience in Traffic Analysis and in preparing Traffic & Transportation Assessments (TTA), including planning applications and environmental impact assessments relating to proposed developments, continuation of existing operations, or for applications for licences in relation to various development types.

Dr. Charles Mount

1.45 Dr. Charles Mount is an Archaeologist with more than 30 years' experience of archaeology, cultural heritage and project management. He has extensive experience of environmental impact assessment gained over the last 30 years in a wide range of industries in the private and semi-state sectors including energy, extractive, waste, water, residential, transport and agri-food. Dr. Mount is a member of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland and the Discovery Programme.

He is a graduate of University College Dublin with an M.A, and Ph.D. in Archaeology and has completed the UCD Diploma course in EIA and SEA Management.

References

- Environmental Protection Agency. "Guidelines on the information to be contained within an EIAR", (EPA May 2022).
- European Union Directive 85/337/EEC
- European Union Directive 97/11/EC,
- European Union Directive 2003/35/EC
- European Union Directive 2009/31/EC,
- European Union Directive 2011/92/EU.

Figures

62.01.PLANNING DRAWINGS SITE LOCATION ETC..dwg

0 800m 2000

Metres 1:25,000

NOTES

Extract from Ordnance Survey Discovery Series Mapping - Map Sheets: 1224; 1424

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LEGEND

APPLICATION AREA
16.3 Ha.

QUARRY CONSULTING

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Chartered Geomatics Surveyor
Chartered Mineral Surveyor
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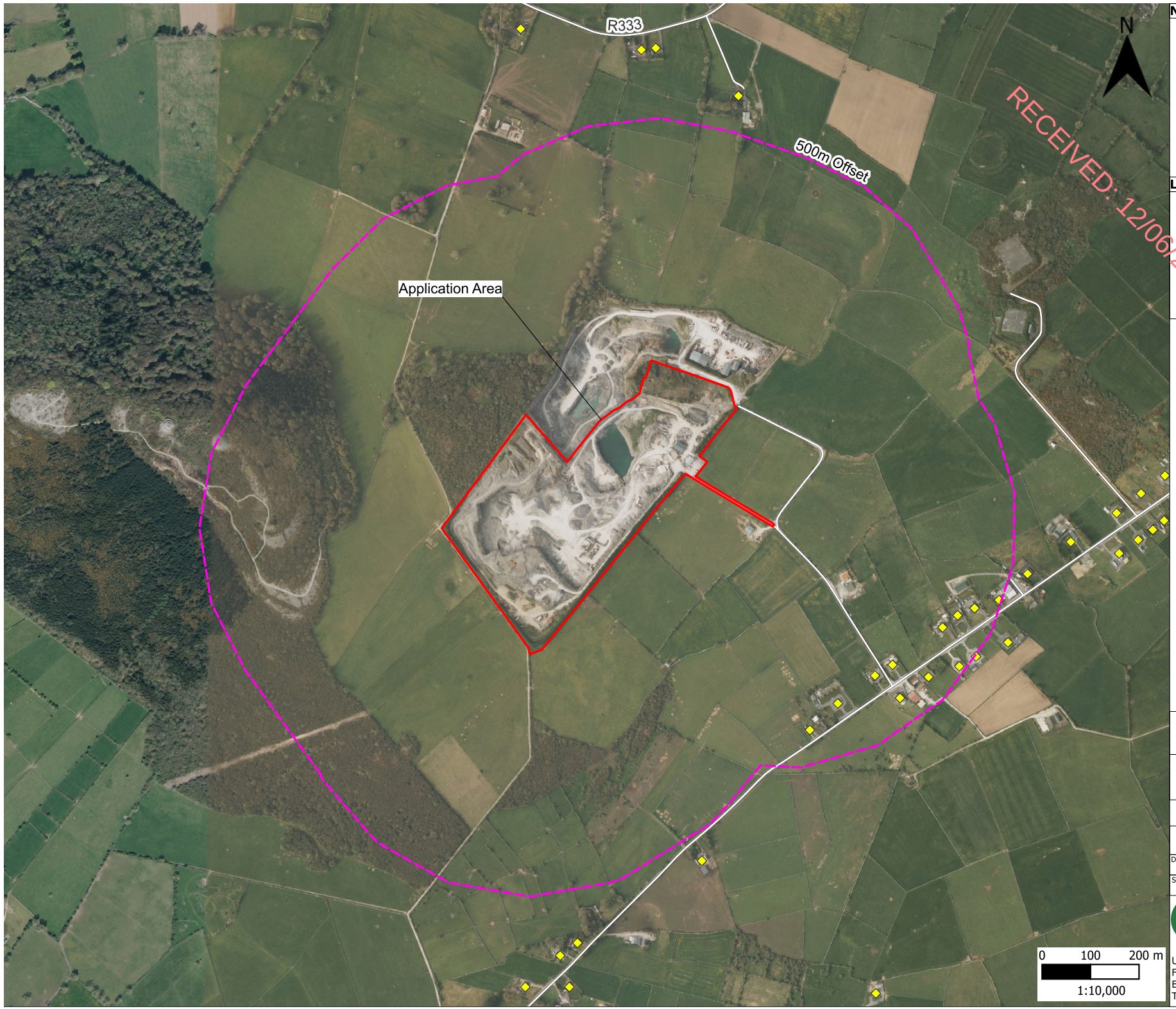
MORTIMER QUARRIES LTD.

EXISTING LIMESTONE QUARRY
CARTRON, BELCLARE,
CO. GALWAY

SITE LOCATION

FIGURE 1.1

Scale	Date
1:25,000	JUNE 2025



Notes:

Legend:

- Application Area
- 500m Offset
- Residential
- Road Network

Mortimer Quarries

Continued Use and Proposed Storage Yard

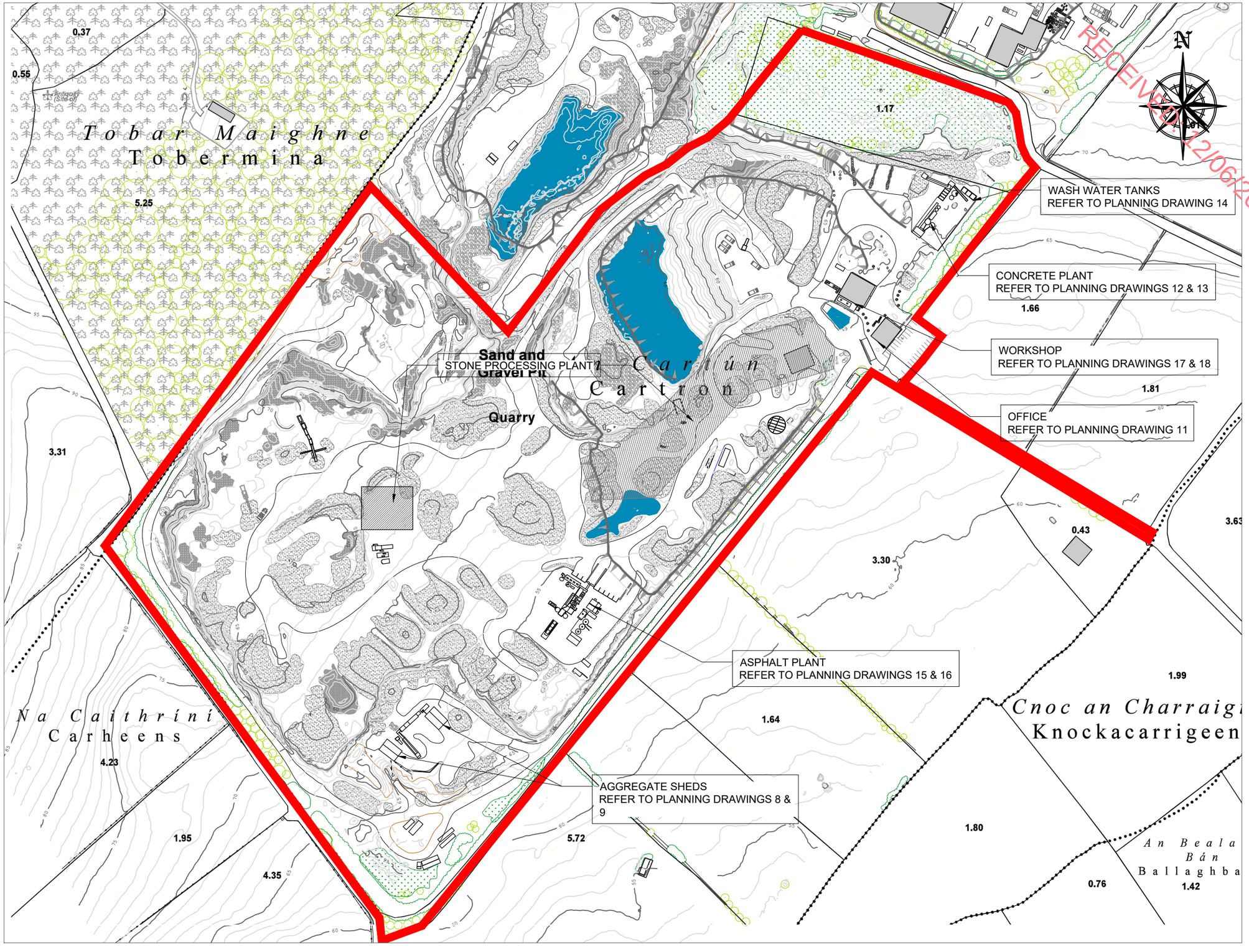
Site Context

Figure 1.2

Drawn By:	RB	Checked By:	PK
Scale:	1:10,000	Date:	June 2025

QUARRY CONSULTING
Unit 3, Cedar Crescent, Cedar Park, Westport, Co. Mayo, F28 PN47.
Email: pkinghan@quarryconsulting.ie
Tel: + 353 86 1712218

62.01.PLANNING DRAWINGS SITE LOCATION ETC..dwg



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Metres 1:2500

NOTES

Extract from Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Mapping - Map Sheets: 2880; 2880-A

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TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY QUARRY CONSULTING MAY 2024

LEGEND

APPLICATION AREA
c. 16.3 Ha.

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MORTIMER QUARRIES LTD.

EXISTING LIMESTONE QUARRY
CARTRON, BELCLARE,
CO. GALWAY

EXISTING SITE LAYOUT

FIGURE 1.3

Scale	Date
1:2,500	JUNE 2025