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25 Ardeskin Heights
Donegal Town
Co. Donegal
29th August 2025

File No: QD05E.323037

Application: Quarry Application for Substitute Consent

Address: Townlands of Ballymagroarty & Glasbolie, Ballintra, Co. Donegal, F94 KP08

Applicant: Patrick McCaffrey & Sons Ltd

Dear Sir/Madam,

I was born and raised in Ballymagroarty and even after I moved to the above address in 2006, I spent much of my time caring for my parents there.

I object in the strongest possible terms to this application for substitute consent:-

- The quarry operation has had a very negative impact on our lives from dust, noise, blasting, visual amenity, damage to property, quarry traffic and creation of dangerous quarry cliff faces.
- Their behaviour over the years has shown a complete disregard for the environment, for their neighbours and the planning laws of this country.
- McCaffrey's quarry has shown time and time again that they consider themselves above the law and do not comply with any regulations.
- The substitute consent application is dealing with impacts which have already occurred and the local community had to endure for years and was undertaken without prior environmental assessment or public participation.

My family have for years been trying to get McCaffrey's to comply with planning regulations. Donegal County Council did not enforce the planning laws with McCaffrey's Quarry, and the Council were McCaffrey's biggest customer for stone and macadam. I first wrote to Donegal County Council in January 1999 when McCaffrey's opened the east quarry beside the N15 without planning permission. It is now twenty-six years later and they are still operating without planning permission. When they opened the east quarry, An Garda Síochána stopped the traffic on National Primary Road N15 to facilitate the blasts. In 2007 when McCaffrey's expanded the north quarry onto agricultural lands to the west, my father and neighbours met a Council planner at the site who told them that the expansion did not require planning permission. It took over six months to get this unauthorised quarrying to cease. In 2015 McCaffrey's began quarrying in the south quarry and have created another deep void in the south quarry. In 2020 McCaffrey's commenced importation of stone and continue to operate the quarry in the full knowledge that the ongoing quarrying and ancillary activities is development and is not exempted development, ABP-313030-22. All of these were undertaken without planning permission, environmental assessment or public participation.

Air and noise pollution and blasting from the quarry made life unbearable. Our family cars were covered in dust in the dry weather. My mother was constantly washing windows as they were dirty from lime dust. Many times, my mother had to take clothes in from the line and rewash them as they were covered in tar smuts. The noise at our dwelling was incessant from the quarry breaker and lorries reversing. The blasts were huge and would shake the house causing ceilings to crack and it was very distressing for my mother.

The following anecdotes will demonstrate McCaffrey's Quarry attitude to their neighbours. On one occasion when I was at home alone, vehicles to and from the quarry knocked a large section of drystone wall along the road. I rang the quarry manager and advised him and that the cattle in the field could walk out on the busy N15 adjacent to it. I was told in no uncertain terms that the lorries were owner driven, it wasn't McCaffrey's problem, and to build it myself. On other occasions the quarry pumped water onto our lands and flooded the field where my father was trying to save hay. Complaints were met with derision and scorn. This bully boy attitude is their modus operandi to their neighbours.

The north quarry has been abandoned and left in a dreadful state with sheer cliff faces and a quarry lake. There are berms built around the quarry which are a blight on the landscape and block the views. The sheep wire fencing around the quarry is wholly inadequate and this is an accident waiting to happen if someone climbs over the fence. The restoration plan submitted with the application is non-existent and is basically an admission by McCaffrey's that the north quarry cannot be remediated. The north quarry is a health and safety hazard and must not be granted retrospective planning permission.

The south quarry is built on both sides of the road, and the public has to traverse through a working quarry, with machinery and quarry vehicles crossing over and back. This is a traffic hazard. The gates to the south quarry are left open and is health and safety risk with moving plant and machinery and vertical cliff faces.

The application is for substitute consent and requires an access onto the N15. My application for a one-off rural dwelling on the family farm was refused permission, ABP-304620-19, for the following reason:-

The proposed development of a house at this location would result in the intensification of a country lane which has a poorly designed Y junction onto the N15 where a speed limit of 100 km/h applies. It is considered that the additional and conflicting turning movements generated by the proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard, would interfere with the free flow of traffic on this national road, would compromise the level of service and carrying capacity of the road at this location, and would fail to protect public investment in the national road network, both by itself and by the undesirable precedent it would set for similar such development. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

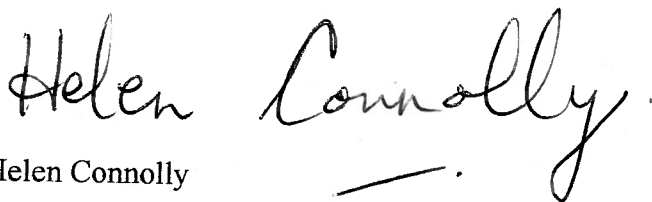
The original junction of the public road with N15 for my dwelling had much better sight lines than either of the two public road junctions at McCaffrey's Quarry onto N15. However, I had to take responsibility for a public road junction in the charge of Donegal County Council. I had to relocate the public road junction 50m to the south, to increase sightlines to the north from 165m to 215m. I also had to construct a T junction with a straight approach onto the N15.

The southern junction of McCaffrey's Quarry, where public road joins N15 is located on a dangerous bend. The northern junction where public road joins N15 is a substandard Y junction. Drawing NO. MM250709-09 Sightlines shows sightlines of 165m which do not meet the minimum standard of 215m. The stopping sight distances are not shown but are also substandard. There have been several traffic accidents on N15 within the sightlines envelope of these junctions resulting in injury and four fatalities. Furthermore, the intensification of use for the quarry is significantly greater than a rural dwelling and the quarry development would constitute a traffic hazard on N15.

It is incomprehensible that a quarry which is completely unauthorised and continues to operate; a quarry that never had any planning permission and ignored enforcement notices; a quarry that has caused irreparable damage to the environment with the creation of huge voids in the landscape; a quarry that is incapable of being remediated and is a health and safety risk; a quarry that the public has to traverse through with machinery and quarry vehicles crossing over and back; a quarry that caused significant impacts of dust, noise, blasting, impacted human health and damaged visual amenity; a quarry that would endanger public safety and constitute a traffic hazard on N15, a quarry that undertook further unauthorised quarrying without environmental assessment or public participation, could be considered a suitable candidate for substitute consent much less be granted retrospective planning permission for a substandard quarry.

I urge you to refuse this planning application.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Connolly