

SECTION 12 : MATERIAL ASSETS

12.1 INTRODUCTION

This study addresses the impact of the restoration of the former sand and gravel quarry at Blackhall, Naas, Co. Kildare on materials assets in the surrounding area. This study is intended to accompany the application by Behan's Land Restoration Ltd. to the Environmental Protection Agency for a Waste Licence in respect of the proposed restoration works.

In undertaking this study, due regard has been had to aspects such as infrastructure, economic activities and property values in the vicinity of the site, and the impact of the continued restoration of the application site on these factors. The study has also had regard to the EPA publication 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statement' (March 2002).

12.2 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

12.2.1 Outline and Methodology of the Baseline Study

The baseline study of the area with regard to material assets involved a general assessment of the local road network around the application site, economic activities, commercial properties and housing in the area. Information presented is based primarily on observations made during a site visit to the area in February 2008 and information obtained from the internet.

12.2.2 Site Context

The former sand and gravel quarry which is currently being restored and to which this application refers lies approximately 5km south-east of Naas, Co. Kildare and 5km north-west of Blessington, Co. Wicklow. The site lies in the foothills of the Wicklow mountains, in an area designated as the East Kildare Uplands by the Kildare County Development Plan. Most of the established land use in the vicinity of the site is agricultural, predominantly dairying and livestock (cattle and sheep) rearing.

12.2.3 Infrastructure

The application site fronts onto a relatively lightly trafficked local road which has a number of one-off residential units located intermittently along it. This local road runs northwards to Beggars End crossroads, a junction with the R410 Regional Road. A relatively high proportion of the traffic along the local road is HGV traffic generated by restoration activities at the application site and by nearby extractive industries at Walshestown and Newtown Great. There is no other transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the site.

The north-eastern corner of the application site is traversed by 220kV electrical cables. Two pylons are located within the application site and are founded at original ground level, no sand and gravel extraction having occurred within an exclusion zone established around them. Overhead electrical supply and telephone cables run along the local road beyond the south-western boundary and also parallel to the hedgerows on along the western and northern boundaries.

It is understood that the main Ballymore to Dublin water supply pipeline also crosses the north-eastern corner of the site, beneath an triangular area of undisturbed ground.

12.2.4 Land Use

The application site is located within a rural agricultural landscape. The final restoration of the site will restore the agricultural landscape to its original, pre-extraction state. The backfilling operation at the site will not impact on, or interfere with, any established agricultural activities at surrounding landholdings.

There are no tourist attractions or sites of interest in the immediate vicinity of the application site. Most of the tourist interest in the area is focussed on the nearby towns of Naas and Blessington.

The only facility of any recreational or leisure interest is Punchestown Racecourse which is located approximately 1km west of the site. While race meetings are only occasionally held at the course, there are more frequent events held at the Events and Exhibitions Centre on the course grounds. Local land use is indicated on Figure 12.1

12.2.5 Housing

As discussed in Section 3, the population of Newtown DED has grown at a moderate rate during the two inter-censal periods 1996 to 2002 and 2002 to 2006. The proximity of the area to the towns and employment centres of Naas and Blessington and to Dublin further beyond, coupled with lower local house prices have contributed to population growth in the area, which may be considered as part of the Greater Dublin housing market. Most of the housing in the area has been established for several (>5) years.

12.2.6 Groundwater

The sand and gravel deposits beneath the application site are classified as a locally important gravel aquifer 'Lg' by the National Aquifer Map. This deposit can store and transmit relatively large quantities of groundwater due to its relatively permeable nature. It is likely that many of the local houses in the vicinity of the application site source drinking water from this aquifer as there is no mains water supply in the area. Section 6 addresses groundwater issues in more detail.

12.3 IMPACT OF RESTORATION WORKS

12.3.1 Short-Term Impacts

As the application site has functioned as an inert waste recovery facility for more than 6 years, there are likely to be few additional short-term impacts arising from its continued operation. The level of HGV movements to and from the site will remain at present levels and the only conceivable short term impact would be a barely discernable increase in existing traffic movements to and from the facility during the installation and commissioning of site infrastructure. These impacts would be minor negative and temporary in nature

The backfilling activities at the site present a number of risks to groundwater including fuel spillage, increases in suspended solids in run-off and placement of a rogue load of contaminated soils. Overall, these risks are likely to constitute a minor to moderate negative impact. They are addressed in more detail in Section 6 of this Environmental Impact Statement.

There may be some short-term impacts at the two residences adjacent to the site boundary to the north-west and north-east of the site when active backfilling of Areas 3C and 4A is ongoing. The most noticeable short term impacts will be increased ambient noise and dust levels. These impacts are likely to be minor and temporary in nature and are addressed in Sections 7 and 8 of this Environmental Impact Statement.

12.3.2 Long-Term Impacts

The continued backfilling of the former sand and gravel quarry will have little impact on the existing public road network, other than an increased traffic hazard if HGV's egressing the site carry mud onto the road. There will be no impact on the existing electricity or water supply infrastructure.

The continuation of waste recovery activities at the application site will have no impact on established activities at the adjacent sand and gravel quarry at Walshestown operated by Cemex (Ireland) Ltd, nor at the nearby quarry in Newtown Great operated by CPI Ltd. There are no other commercial operations in the immediate vicinity of the site.

In the absence of any local tourist attractions or established tourist / leisure activities in the area, there will be no impact on local tourism. There will be no detrimental impact on established activities at Punchestown Racecourse.

Given that all the materials used in the restoration of the site will be completely inert and that specific measures will be implemented to ensure this, there will be no long term risks of soil or

groundwater pollution and no detrimental impacts on land values or residential property value. It is arguable that the infilling of a large and unsightly void may actually enhance property values in the immediate vicinity of the site in the longer term.

In the long-term, backfilling of existing groundwater ponds with granular fill or processed secondary aggregate and a significant depth of inert impermeable, cohesive soil (predominantly glacial till) will increase protection to, and reduce the vulnerability of, the existing groundwater aquifer to contamination risks associated with accidental chemical spills and agricultural or animal wastes.

12.3.3 Interaction with other Environmental Receptors

There are no additional interactions other than those discussed in the text above.

12.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

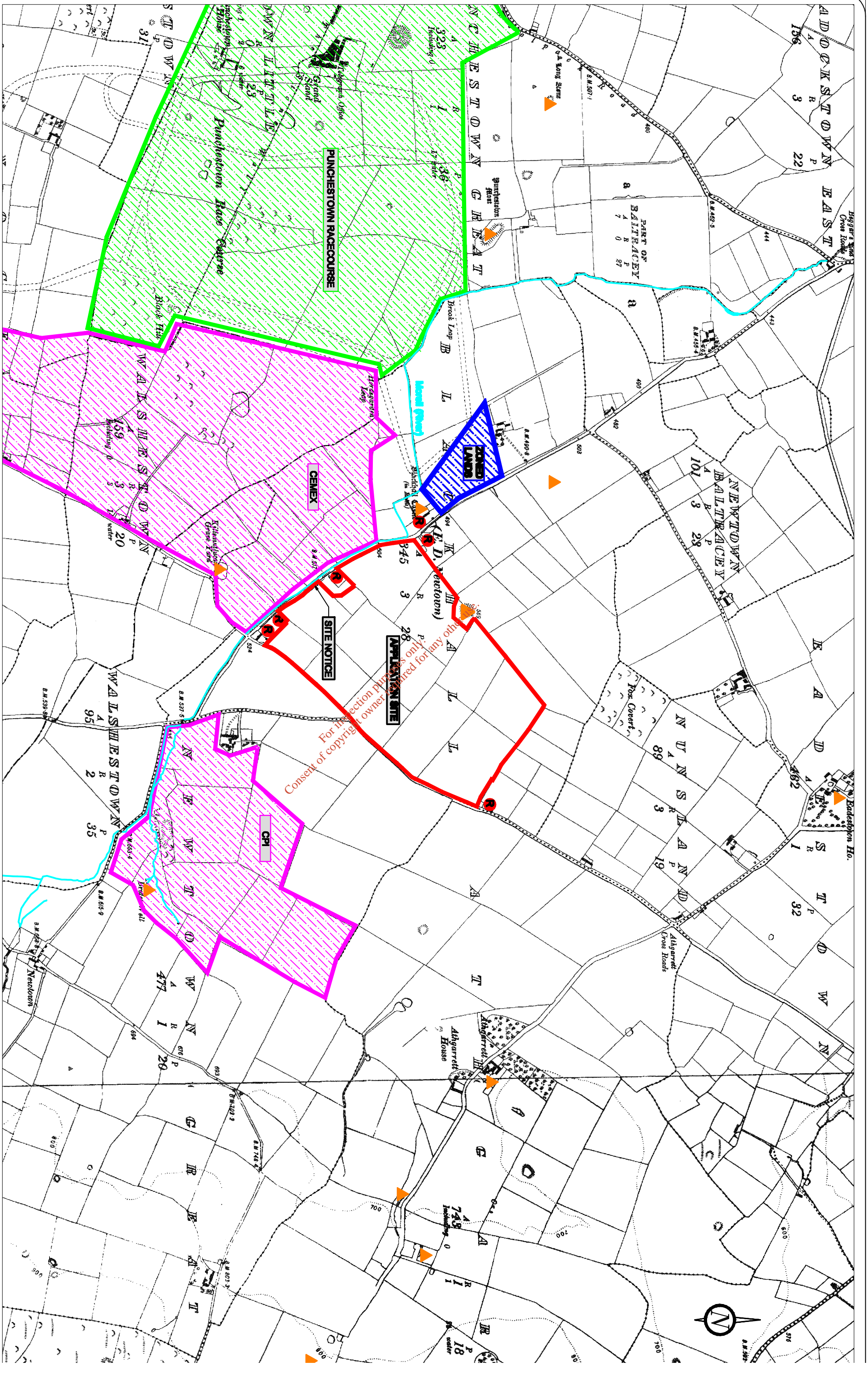
Warning notices, speed restriction signs and construction traffic signposting will be established along the existing local road network to direct traffic to the existing waste facility. Signposting will also be erected along paved and unpaved roads within the application site in order to maintain a safe and orderly traffic regime at the site. All construction traffic exiting the site will pass through a wheel wash, thereby minimising amount of mud and soil carried onto the local road network.

Measures to minimise groundwater, noise and dust impacts at nearby residences will be implemented when active backfilling operations are under way in the immediate vicinity thereof - refer to Sections 6, 7 and 8 of this Environmental Impact Statement.

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FIGURES

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BEHAN'S LAND RESTORATION LTD.
 BLACKHALL, PUNCHESTOWN
 NAAS, CO. KILDARE

JBA
 JOHN BARNETT & ASSOCIATES
 7 DUNDRUM BUSINESS PARK
 WINDY ARBOUR
 DUBLIN 14

LEGEND & NOTES:

- Application Site
- Priority / Leisure
- Active Quarry Operations
- Zoned Lands (P-U1)
- Residence Monuments & Listed Structures
- Watercourse

Rev.	Date	By	Description
1	FEB 08	MK	
0	FEB 08	LMC	

Site: LANDS AT BLACKHALL, CO. KILDARE
Project: RESTORATION OF FORMER GRAVEL PIT
Title: APPLICATION SITE AND ADJACENT LAND USE
Drawn: MK
Scale: 1:10,500
Job No: 3748
Date: March 2008

FIGURE 12.1