

Comments on the Hunua Quarry Development Fast-track Application

Project: Hunua Quarry Development

Applicant: Winstone Aggregates (a division of Fletcher Concrete and Infrastructure Limited)

To the Expert Panel,

I wish to lodge my objection to the Hunua Quarry Development application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

As a neighbouring landowner and resident, I have significant concerns that the proposed expansion of quarrying activities will result in unacceptable adverse effects on the surrounding community, rural environment, and neighbouring properties. In my view, these effects have not been adequately avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

My property has a direct view into the quarry pit. I therefore experience the effects of the quarry firsthand and am particularly concerned about the consequences of any further expansion of its operations.

1. Noise Effects

The proposed expansion has the potential to increase noise associated with quarry operations, including blasting, crushing, screening, heavy machinery, reversing alarms, and truck movements.

Although the applicant has provided technical noise assessments, I am concerned that modelling and compliance measurements do not necessarily reflect the actual day-to-day experience of residents living near the quarry. In a rural environment, quarry noise can be particularly noticeable and intrusive, especially during early mornings, evenings, and still weather conditions.

I have personally heard quarry-related noise as early as approximately **5:30 a.m.** This is inconsistent with the peaceful rural environment that neighbouring residents reasonably expect to enjoy. I was understanding that Symonds Hill quarry was only supposed to be operational at 7am

Operational noise adversely affects, or has the potential to adversely affect:

- the use and enjoyment of our property;
- peaceful rural living;
- outdoor activities;
- sleep and wellbeing; and
- the overall amenity values of the area.

I do not consider the proposed mitigation measures sufficient to adequately protect neighbouring residents, particularly if quarry operations are expanded.

2. Dust and Air Quality

Dust generated from quarrying, blasting, crushing, stockpiles, exposed quarry surfaces, and heavy vehicle movements is a major concern.

Of particular concern is that **even on weekends when the quarry is not operating**, we can experience substantial dust during windy conditions. At times, thick dust settles on roofs and vehicles, and we have experienced significant silt accumulation in our water tanks.

This raises serious questions about the effectiveness of existing dust controls and the potential for the problem to worsen if quarrying activities are expanded.

Dust has the potential to:

- settle on homes, buildings, roofs, water tanks, vehicles, and outdoor areas;
- contaminate or adversely affect rainwater collection systems;
- affect gardens, pasture, and vegetation;
- reduce local air quality; and
- create health concerns for residents.

The application does not, in my view, provide sufficient assurance that dust emissions can be effectively controlled, particularly during dry and windy conditions when dust generation and dispersal may be at their greatest.

3. Visual and Landscape Effects

The proposed quarry expansion will further industrialise what is otherwise a rural landscape.

My property has a **direct view into the quarry pit**, making visual effects a particularly significant concern for me.

Expanded quarry faces, stockpiles, machinery, lighting, earthworks, and associated infrastructure will further alter the visual character and amenity of the surrounding area.

These visual effects do not stop at the quarry boundary. They directly affect neighbouring residents who live with views of the quarry and diminish the rural and natural landscape values of the area.

While mitigation planting may be proposed, vegetation can take many years to mature and may never fully screen large quarry faces, exposed rock, machinery, stockpiles, and other quarry infrastructure.

4. Blasting, Vibration and Structural Damage

One of my most serious concerns relates to blasting and its effects on neighbouring properties.

Existing and future blasting has the potential to cause:

- vibration affecting neighbouring properties;
- cracking of building foundations;
- cracking of walls and other parts of buildings;
- cracking or damage to driveways and other structures;
- damage to farm buildings and infrastructure; and
- ongoing concern regarding the structural integrity of neighbouring properties.

This concern is based on my **actual experience**, not simply a hypothetical future risk.

I have observed damage at my house that I believe has been caused by blasting associated with the quarry. I have attached photographs/evidence of this damage to my comments.

I previously submitted a remediation proposal to Winstone regarding this damage. However, Winstone did not accept responsibility, advising that its blasting was within monitored limits.

This response is a significant concern. Compliance with a monitored vibration limit does not, by itself, resolve the question of whether damage has occurred or what caused that damage. Nor does it provide an adequate remedy for a neighbouring property owner who reasonably believes their property has been damaged as a consequence of quarry operations.

If the expansion is approved, neighbouring residents should not be placed in the position of having to establish damage after the event without an agreed independent baseline condition of their properties.

I therefore request that the Panel require:

- independent pre-blast structural and condition surveys of potentially affected neighbouring properties;
- photographic and written documentation of existing cracks and structural conditions;
- periodic follow-up surveys throughout quarry operations;
- independent monitoring of blast vibration at appropriate & various neighbouring properties, not just the homestead;
- transparent access for affected residents to relevant blast monitoring records;
- a clear and independent procedure for investigating complaints of property damage; and
- an enforceable mechanism requiring the quarry operator to remediate or compensate for damage where quarry operations are determined to have caused or materially contributed to that damage.

Given my previous experience attempting to have property damage addressed, I consider these protections particularly important.

5. Groundwater and Water Table Concerns

I am concerned that expansion and deepening of quarrying activities could alter groundwater systems and underground water tables.

Potential impacts include:

- lowering of groundwater levels;
- changes to natural groundwater flows;
- impacts on private water supplies and bores;
- effects on springs, wetlands, and nearby streams; and
- long-term environmental consequences that may not become apparent for many years.

These effects are particularly concerning because changes to groundwater can be difficult or impossible to reverse once they have occurred.

In my view, the application does not provide sufficient certainty that these risks have been fully understood or that appropriate safeguards will be in place throughout the life of the quarry and following its eventual closure.

If approval is granted, groundwater monitoring should be independently undertaken before, during, and after quarrying activities, with clearly defined baseline conditions and enforceable trigger levels requiring investigation and operational changes where adverse effects are detected.

There should also be clear responsibility for restoring or replacing affected private water supplies if quarry operations are found to have adversely affected them.

6. Wider and Cumulative Environmental Effects

The proposal raises wider environmental concerns, including:

- cumulative degradation of the surrounding environment;
- effects on native vegetation and wildlife habitat;
- increased sediment and stormwater runoff;
- increased heavy vehicle movements;
- increased emissions associated with quarrying and transportation; and
- further industrialisation of a rural area.

It is important that these effects are not considered only in isolation.

The cumulative effect of decades of noise, dust, blasting, vibration, traffic, landscape modification, groundwater risk, and other environmental impacts may be considerably greater than the apparent significance of any individual effect considered separately.

I therefore ask the Panel to consider the **combined and cumulative effects** of the proposal on neighbouring residents and the surrounding rural environment.

7. Quality of Life and Rural Amenity

The combined effects of noise, dust, blasting, traffic, vibration, visual impacts, and environmental degradation have a direct effect on the quality of life of residents living around the quarry.

People choose to live in this rural area because of its peaceful environment, clean air, open landscape, and rural character.

Further expansion of quarrying activities risks substantially diminishing those values.

These adverse effects are also not temporary. They may continue throughout the remaining life of the quarry, potentially for many years, with some environmental and landscape effects continuing beyond the cessation of quarrying.

For neighbouring residents, this means potentially living with the consequences of an expanded industrial activity for a significant portion of their lives.

8. Concerns Regarding the Fast-track Process

I am also concerned that the Fast-track Approvals process provides more limited opportunities for public participation than would ordinarily be available through other consenting processes.

Given the scale, duration, and potential long-term effects of this proposal, it is particularly important that the experiences and concerns of neighbouring landowners and affected residents are given substantial weight.

Technical reports and predictive modelling are important, but they should not displace the real-world experiences of people who already live alongside the quarry and experience its existing effects.

My concerns regarding noise, dust, blasting, visual effects, and property damage arise from living next to the existing quarry operations. These experiences should be carefully considered when assessing predictions about the effects of an expanded operation.

Conclusion and Relief Sought

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that the Expert Panel **decline the Hunua Quarry Development application**.

I am concerned that the proposed expansion would impose significant and long-lasting adverse effects on neighbouring residents, properties, rural amenity, and the surrounding environment, and that the proposed mitigation measures do not provide sufficient certainty that these effects will be adequately avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

If the Panel is nevertheless minded to grant approval, I respectfully request that stringent and enforceable conditions be imposed, including, at a minimum:

- stricter controls on blasting frequency, timing, and vibration;

- independent pre-operation and ongoing structural/condition surveys of potentially affected neighbouring properties;
- independent monitoring of blasting and vibration;
- transparent provision of relevant blast-monitoring information to affected residents;
- comprehensive dust monitoring, including monitoring at appropriate neighbouring properties, with enforceable limits and trigger levels;
- stricter operational noise controls, including appropriate restrictions on early-morning operations;
- ongoing independent noise monitoring, noting that I have heard quarry-related noise from approximately **5:30 a.m.**;
- independent groundwater and surface-water monitoring, including baseline monitoring before expanded operations commence;
- clear groundwater trigger levels requiring investigation and corrective action;
- regular independent environmental audits;
- a robust, transparent, and independently reviewable complaints process;
- meaningful and enforceable mechanisms for addressing non-compliance and adverse effects;
- clear financial responsibility for remediation or compensation where quarry activities are determined to have caused or materially contributed to damage to neighbouring properties; and
- periodic review of conditions and monitoring requirements where actual adverse effects exceed those predicted in the application.

In particular, I ask the Panel to consider my experience with suspected blasting-related damage to my property. I previously raised this matter with Winstone and submitted a remediation proposal, but responsibility was not accepted on the basis that blasting was said to be within monitored limits. In my view, this demonstrates why reliance on monitored compliance alone is insufficient and why an **independent property-damage assessment and resolution process** is necessary.

I ask the Expert Panel to give substantial weight to the cumulative impacts on neighbouring residents, including the long-term loss of rural amenity, environmental values, property enjoyment, and quality of life.

Attachments:

Photographs/evidence of damage to my property which I believe is associated with quarry blasting, which we have had assessed.

Thank you for considering my comments and the experiences of those living directly alongside the quarry.

Yours faithfully,

Paul & Vivienne Manak











