

File With _____

**LARGE RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT
CORRESPONDENCE FORM**

Appeal No: ACP 323082-29

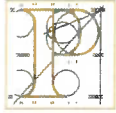
Please treat correspondence received on 17/08/25 as follows:

1. Update database with new agent for Applicant/Appellant _____ 2. Acknowledge with LRD <u>40</u> 3. Keep copy of Commission's Letter ☐	1. RETURN TO SENDER with LRD _____ 2. Keep Envelope: ☐ 3. Keep Copy of Commission's letter ☐
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Amendments/Comments	<u>online obs from Bob Jackson</u>

4. Attach to file (a) SHD/LRD Unit ☐ (b) Inspector ☒	RETURN TO EO ☐
EO: <u>Dennis WA ark</u> Date: <u>20/08/25</u>	Plans Date Stamped ☐ Date Stamped Filled in ☐ AA: <u>SD</u> Date: <u>22/8/25</u>

J. Sweeney



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Large-scale Residential Development Appeal Observation

Online Reference
LRD-OBS-006342

Online Observation Details

Contact Name
Bob Jackson

Lodgement Date
17/08/2025 23:53:36

Case Number / Description
323082

Payment Details

Payment Method
Online Payment

Cardholder Name
Robert Jackson

Payment Amount
€50.00

Fee Refund Requisition

Please Arrange a Refund of Fee of

€

Lodgement No

LDG-082181-25

Reason for Refund

Documents Returned to Observer

☐ Yes ☐ No

Request Emailed to Senior Executive Officer for Approval

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed

EO

Date

Finance Section

Payment Reference

ch_3RxFSGB1CW0EN5FC1IYde31w

Checked Against Fee Income Online

EO/AA (Accounts Section)

Amount

€

Refund Date

Authorised By (1)

SEO (Finance)

Authorised By (2)

Chief Officer/Director of Corporate Affairs/SAO/Board
Member

Date

Date

Bob & Stephanie Jackson
5 Buxton Terrace,
Sundays Well Road,
Cork
T23H2X0
17th August 2025

The Secretary,
An Coimisiún Pleanála.
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902

Ref:	Planning Application: 25/43847
Applicant Name:	Bellmount Good Shepherd Ltd
Subject Site Owners:	Moneda Developments Limited
Development Address:	The Former Good Shepherd Convent Site, Convent Avenue and Buckston Hill, Sundays Well, Cork.

To An Coimisiún Pleanála,

We wish to appeal the decision by Cork City Council to grant planning permission to Bellmount Good Shepherd Ltd for the redevelopment of the former Good Shepherd Convent and surrounding grounds in Sunday's Well.

We wish to appeal on the following grounds:

- 1. Historical Significance of the Good Shepherd Convent Site and the existence of Unmarked Graves:**
 - this appeal is based on our view that Cork City Council (CCC) granted permission for the redevelopment of the site, which was one of the largest Magdalene Laundries in Ireland, without taking into consideration the existence of unmarked graves containing the remains of unidentified women and children.
 - It has been widely reported that unmarked graves exist on the site. Cork County Council acknowledges the possibility of finding human remains at the Good Shepherd site during construction.
 - In February 2013, *The Irish Examiner* reported the existence of a mass grave of Magdalene women at the Good Shepherd site (<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-20221538.html>). No one knows for certain how many bodies are buried on the 7.8 acre site, or where their remains lie.
 - In April 2025, *The Echo* reported that at least 188 women died while in the care of the Good Shepherd Sisters in Cork (<https://www.echolive.ie/corknews/arid-41610172.html>). Opposite the nuns' graveyard on the site, near a stone cross in its north-west corner above Cork City Gaol, lies a mass grave that remained unmarked until the late 1990s. A headstone was only erected following a campaign by a former resident of the Laundry, Mary Norris.
 - With regards to an appeal against a similar development at the former the Bessborough Mother and Baby Home, An Bord Pleanála stated: *"The Board is not satisfied that the site was not previously used as, and does not contain, a children's burial ground and considers that there are reasonable concerns in relation to the potential for a children's burial ground within the site, associated*

with the former use of the lands as a Mother and Baby home over the period 1922 to 1998.” (Board Direction BD–008250-21 [ABP 308790-20])

- Cork County Council’s “Schedule of Conditions” included as part of the conditional planning permission, granted and published in June 2025, confirms awareness on behalf of the Council of the likelihood of unmarked graves at the site. Condition 7 states that *“should human remains be located in the course of construction, all work shall cease at all parts of the proposed development site and all relevant authorities, including the City Coroner and An Garda Síochána, will be informed of the location of the previously unrecorded human remains.”*

2. Inadequate Parking Provision and Traffic Impact

- The provision of just 37 on-site parking spaces for over 900 students is ludicrous. While the development is labelled as "car-free," this is not credible. Students in Ireland often own and use cars, and the intention to facilitate tourist rentals during summer months further increases demand. Overflow parking will inevitably spill onto surrounding residential streets, exacerbating already significant congestion, reducing pedestrian safety, and obstructing access for emergency and service vehicles.
- The proposed sole vehicular access via Convent Avenue, a narrow, already congested route, is wholly unsuitable to accommodate the increased traffic volumes from residents, service vehicles, and deliveries. Existing traffic studies fail to offer realistic solutions to the resulting congestion, and local roads lack the capacity to safely absorb the anticipated increase in daily movement. Public transport in the area is inadequate, and road width constraints make the inclusion of bicycle lanes infeasible.
- Another real concern is the significant risk posed by opening up Buxton Hill to approximately 1,000 students and tourists. The Buxton Hill entrance is entirely unsuitable for such high-volume usage due to several critical safety issues: its steep incline, narrow width, absence of a footpath, and the mixing of pedestrian and residential vehicular traffic. Of particular concern is the dangerous blind corner at its junction with Sunday’s Well Road, which already presents a serious hazard. No mitigation measures have been proposed, nor have any specific conditions been imposed by Cork City Council to address the risks associated with using Buxton Hill as an access point. This omission is unacceptable given the scale of the development and the clear threat to public safety.

3. Flood Risk and Geological Instability

- The introduction of extensive impermeable surfaces will drastically reduce natural water absorption, significantly increasing surface water runoff and flood risk to surrounding lower-lying properties. The site is also known to be geologically sensitive, with concerns regarding unstable bedrock and the presence of natural springs or underground aquifers. There have been reports of structural damage and water ingress in nearby properties, likely linked to underground water movement.
- The difference in height referred to above is at least 15 feet and up to 20 feet in some places. The four houses in Lee View which lie at lower levels to the GSC have the boundary wall weeping and oftentimes gushing with fresh water from bedrock at least 2 metres under the ground level of the GSC site above them.
- Historically, houses in this area have been plagued with damp. The increased below surface run-off caused by such a large scale development and the disruption of natural springs will significantly increase the flow of stormwater through these aquifers resulting in flooding and undermining of the foundations of the properties to the south of the development (Buxton Terrace, Sundays Well Road etc)

- It is of concern that the entire section dealing with the geology of the site is heavily based on the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) done by ARUP for Frinilla back in 2005. Even here, the Frinilla report states that the report “did not describe the bedrock geology in any detail.”
- EIS information from the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) Groundwater Protection scheme indicates that the site of the proposed development is located in an area which has an aquifer classification of "L1" indicating that the site is underlain by a "locally important" bedrock aquifer, which is “moderately productive.” The Groundwater Protection Zone within which the sites falls, is classed as "E" indicating that the aquifer is of extreme vulnerability.
- Given the above facts the developers must undertake to complete a Geological Survey of the whole site to ascertain if the site can withstand the scale of the anticipated construction.

4. Disruption from Construction Activities:

- Considering the huge scale, and the anticipated duration of the construction works, the impact on the local community will be considerable. Noise pollution, dust, increased traffic, and general disruption are unacceptable, particularly when the development is so clearly out of step with the character and capacity of the area. The prolonged disturbance poses a serious threat to residents’ well-being and community cohesion.
- Cork City Council has granted a 7-year planning permission for this large-scale, phased development. This effectively authorises an extended period of major construction activity in a densely populated, topographically constrained residential area. The scale and duration of the works will result in sustained noise, dust, traffic congestion, construction vehicle movements, and disruption to local access over several years, 6 full days per week. The cumulative impact of such prolonged disruption has not been adequately assessed in the planning decision and poses a serious threat to residential amenity, public safety, and quality of life for local residents. A development of this scale, stretched across several years, would impose an unreasonable and sustained burden on the immediate community. Granting such an extensive timeline is inconsistent with the principles of proportionality, context-sensitive development, and good planning practice.
- Traffic gridlock on Sundays Well Road and Shanakiel Road, extending to Blarney, Kerry Pike and Clogheen is a daily experience for local communities. This is due to the fact that roads and bridges in these areas, designed in previous centuries, must accommodate most of the vehicular traffic from the south and west of the city, travelling to and from the north of the city and county. This has long been acknowledged by local representatives; <https://www.echolive.ie/corknews/arid-41388433.html>
- The fact that a North Ring Road connecting the Ballincollig bypass to the Mallow road has been identified as essential to alleviating traffic congestion in the north of the city is evidenced by its inclusion in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040; https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Cork_Met_Area_Transport_Strategy_web_Part_1_Part8.pdf
- The prospect of adding a large scale construction project, with all of the associated vehicular access and egress of trucks, deliveries, machinery, construction workers and so on, to the middle of an already gridlocked area, does not seem to have been considered by Cork City Council.

5. False Binary of Development vs. "Do Nothing":

- The Good Shepherd site has been on Cork City Council’s Derelict Sites Register since February 2019. Councillors have called on the Council to compulsorily purchase the site.

- Local residents are very much in favour of the derelict site being redeveloped, in a manner which local the transport infrastructure, environment and community can accommodate. One that is sensitive to the history of the site. Appropriate memorial and commemoration of the history of the site should be a priority. The age profile and demographics of residents in the surrounding areas are such that the site would more appropriately be developed through the provision of assisted living housing units for the elderly, low density housing, social housing, children's playground, community gardens.
- Here are some examples of an alternative vision for the Good Shepherd site:

