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Re: Proposed apartment development at former Bessborough Mother and Baby Home

To: Planning Department, Cork City Council

I wish to object to the proposed development of The Bessborough site. It is one of exceptional historical and social significance. Thousands of women and children were confined there within a system now acknowledged to have involved neglect, abuse, and forced family separation.

Critically, there is credible evidence that a substantial number of infants are buried in unmarked graves on or around the site, the locations of which remain unidentified.

In these circumstances, the proposed development is clearly premature. No comprehensive archaeological or forensic investigation has been undertaken to establish the extent of burials. Granting permission risks disturbance of human remains and the irreversible loss of evidence.

The proposal also fails to adequately recognise the site's cultural and memorial significance, contrary to the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). There is no agreed framework for commemoration, nor evidence of meaningful engagement with survivors or affected families.

To permit residential development at this stage would effectively result in the "concreting over" of a site of profound national importance, undermining the State's obligations to truth recovery and remembrance.

It is time we start to do right by all those beautiful souls who were harmed by our cruel history. I respectfully request that permission be refused, or at minimum deferred pending full site investigation, protection of any burial areas, and the development of an appropriate memorialisation strategy.

Kind regards

Chiara Henderson