

Observation on the appeal against the decision to grant planning permission for a Large Scale Development at Bessborough, Blackrock, Cork.

An Coimisiún Pleanála - Case reference: LH28.324153

Planning Authority Case Reference: 2544442

From:

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To whom it may concern

The decision to grant planning permission to developer Estuary View Enterprises for a development at Bessborough, Blackrock in Cork is fundamentally flawed.

Planning permission for the site was refused numerous times for very important reasons that have not changed or been mitigated.

There are binding duties under international human rights law, and related domestic legal obligations concerning the recorded deaths and disappearances at Bessborough. The State is required to fully investigate and report on these abuses and to make appropriate redress.

The State failed the mothers, children and families that went through Bessborough. Enormous pain and grief was visited on people, and this is now documented and indisputable. The stark question facing Cork City Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála is will that failure be perpetuated and exacerbated, or will steps be taken to find a response that is respectful of the lives shattered, and the deaths that should have been avoided.

My family is impacted directly by the plan to grant permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development at Bessborough.

My grandparents, Tom and Molly Cooney had their first children on June 4th 1928, twins named Molly and Tommy after their parents. My grandmother was unwell after the births and was in hospital for an extended period. As she could not care for the twin babies they were placed in the temporary care of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Bessborough, Blackrock.

It proved to be a devastating time for the family. On 9th October 1928 baby Tommy died unexpectedly at Bessborough, while in the care of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Baby Tommy Cooney was buried in his grandmother's family grave in Cloyne, where his name is recorded on the gravestone. Baby Molly was removed from Bessborough and cared for by her extended family, and was reunited with her parents in due course. My grandparents went on to have four more children, including my father.



Photo taken at the christening of babies Tommy and Molly Cooney, 1928.

The loss of her twin brother had a significant impact on my auntie Molly, and indeed all the family. When Molly died in 2018, just over 80 years after her brother, we were left to ponder on how much we lost, as a family and as a society, by not having her twin brother Tommy around for all those decades.

	Cork RD	Cork RD						Blackrock	1928	Registrar.
484	1928 Big 4th October Bessboro Blackrock Cork RD	Mary Grove Lacks of Birchwood Rd Kent	H	Hainster	3 mos	Unknown	Marasmus 3 mos Bertified	Sister Eva "Inmate" Bessboro Blackrock	1928 October	D4 Buckley
	1928	Rose							1928	Registrar.

Death record of baby Tommy Cooney

It is my observation, and my concerted plea, that Cork City Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála, must reject the plans to build on the land at Bessborough. There should be meaningful consultation with affected families and the community to agree the appropriate steps to preserve the site, to carry out all necessary investigations in to past human rights abuses, and to commemorate the lives of all those who were impacted by the tragic events that unfolded at Bessborough between 1922 and 1998.