

OBSERVATION

An Coimisiún Pleanála - Case reference: LH28.324153

Planning Authority Case Reference: 2544442

Bessborough, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork

From: Desmond O'Driscoll, 4 Douglas Drive, Ballinlough, Cork

April 17, 2026

I would like to support the appeals against the proposed development at Bessborough.

I have three main areas of concern:

1) Recent history of the site

The awful history of Bessborough under control of the Sacred Heart nuns has been well documented, and the fate of the bodies of hundreds of children (and some of the women who bore them) who died under their 'care' has never been fully ascertained.

The state's Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes concluded: "It is highly likely that burials did take place in the grounds of Bessborough."

Even further forensic investigation and 'safeguards' around the building of the apartments will never fully reveal the truth of what took place on those lands. After the way the State and local authority has failed the children, the women and their families for so many decades, this site is potentially a crime scene, and it would be morally repugnant for planners to agree to turn the site into a housing scheme.

2: Detrimental effect on the area due to over-crowding, traffic, pollution, etc

As longterm residents of the area going back many generations, we have already seen the quality of life in the area deteriorate as thousands of new housing units have been added within the immediate area of Bessborough, and the area also draws in thousands of other people daily for its expanding industrial and retail operations. This development would add to the already existing issues with traffic, pollution, lack of green spaces, etc.

For example, in the immediate vicinity of an area already suffering with traffic and other issues:

- the construction of 1,200 new homes is already under way at Jacob's Island;

- in April 2026 permission was granted for an expansion at Mahon Point for an additional 140,000 sq ft, including 250 apartments. Recently, Transport Infrastructure Ireland warned this will further add to a "deteriorating traffic situation" in the area.
- Also nearby is a project for 274 homes at Blackrock Villas, currently under way.

3. Environmental considerations

The once-rich biodiversity of the immediate area to Bessborough – which includes the estuary and Special Protection Area – has suffered hugely in recent decades with the expansion of the nearby golf course, the construction of the motorway, and general development in the area.

Ironically, this situation has been further worsened by the expansion of the neighbouring 'greenway' which brought the development of more of the previously relatively wild small patches of public land.

Thanking you, Desmond O'Driscoll