

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally object to any proposed planning permission for development on the site of the former Bessborough Mother and Baby Home.

This site is not simply a parcel of land suitable for redevelopment. It is a place marked by profound human suffering, loss, and historical injustice. My objection is not abstract or theoretical—it is deeply personal. My own mother was held there. She escaped, only to be forcibly returned. Her experience is part of a wider, documented history of trauma inflicted on vulnerable women and their children within these institutions.

It is recorded that 923 children died at Bessborough. To this day, the majority of their burial places remain unidentified or unmarked. That fact alone demands the utmost caution, respect, and moral responsibility in determining the future of this land. It is, in every meaningful sense, a site of unresolved grief and, potentially, a crime scene where full truth and accountability have yet to be established.

Proceeding with development under these circumstances' risks erasing both physical evidence and collective memory. It would signal that economic or practical interests are being prioritised over truth, dignity, and remembrance.

There are international precedents for how such sites should be treated. Locations associated with mass suffering and historical wrongdoing are preserved, protected, and transformed into places of reflection, education, and public remembrance—not commercial or residential development. This site deserves the same level of respect and consideration.

Instead of development, I urge that the Bessborough site be preserved in its entirety and carefully transformed into a dedicated public space—such as a memorial park—where the stories of the women and children can be honoured. Such a space would serve not only as a place of remembrance for survivors and families, but also as an important civic and educational resource for the people of Cork City and beyond.

This is an opportunity to acknowledge past wrongs in a meaningful and lasting way. To proceed with development would risk compounding those wrongs by effectively silencing them.

I strongly urge you to refuse any planning permission for development at this site and to instead support its preservation as a place of remembrance, dignity, and public good.

Yours faithfully,
Joseph Fahy

A fortunate survivor!

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