

Case Number: 324153

Name: Meadhbh Campbell

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I am writing to object to the application to demolish 10 buildings and the construction of 140 residential apartments on the site at Bessborough, Blackrock, Co. Cork. It is disgraceful that any changes would be made to this site before a full investigation has been carried out into the Mother and Baby Home which was in operation there until 1998. This is a site of institutional abuse, and 921 children died in Bessborough. Only 64 of their graves have been found. Other Mother and Baby Homes around the country have been found to have hundreds of children buried in unmarked graves and septic tanks, deprived of dignity even in death. It is extremely likely that there are more children buried on the site, and this project cannot be allowed to go ahead.

Cork City Council had rightly denied planning permission many times since 2021. Under the European Convention on Human Rights, the Irish State is obliged to investigate the deaths of children and mothers, and to ascertain the whereabouts of the disappeared and return their remains to relatives. This has not been completed, as they have not used tools such as geophysical surveys using ground-penetrating radar, electrical resistivity or magnetometry. The archaeological excavations ordered under the current planning permission are not sufficient, and should not be the responsibility of the developer. It is neither appropriate nor adequate.

It is wholly inappropriate to build apartments on this land, which should remain as a memorial to those who died and those who survived. Given that Bessborough House is a Protected Structure (ref: RPS 490), I also have serious concerns about the impact that this construction would have on the house, its aesthetic impact and the strain it would put on the surrounding infrastructure. Building on this land would be yet another stain on its legacy, and may be unlawful.