

Pádraig Rice TD,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902.

16th April 2026

Planning Authority: Cork City Council

Appeal Case Number: 324153

Planning authority case reference number: 2544442

Location of proposed development: Bessborough, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork

A chara,

I would like to make the following observations in respect of the above appeal. The proposed development is on the site of a Mother and Baby Home from 1922 to 1998. During this time, 9,768 mothers and 8,938 children were admitted, and the institution was owned and operated by the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

During that time the Mother and Baby Home Commission records that 923 babies born in Bessborough died in infancy or early childhood. There are only sixty-four burials accounted for on the site. The burial place of eight hundred and fifty-nine children is unknown. The Commission reports contain information from numerous sources identifying different areas on the 60-acre site where there may be bodies buried and concludes that it is very likely some of the children are buried on site. The Commission concluded that the only way this can be established is by an excavation of the entire site. No such excavation has ever been conducted.

An Bord Pleanála and An Coimisiún Pleanála has refused planning permission for the site numerous times since May 2021 due to the lack of clarity regarding the whereabouts of children and mothers who were confined in Bessborough. The current application fails to effectively address grounds of refusal on the previous decisions on this site.

The State is obliged under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to investigate the deaths of children and mothers, and to ascertain the whereabouts of the disappeared and return their remains to relatives. To date, the State has not complied with its European legal obligations in respect of the deaths and disappearances of children and women who were confined in Bessborough Mother and Baby institution.

An Coimisiún Pleanála is obliged to uphold the State's European human rights law obligations, this obligation cannot be delegated by way of conditions on a grant of planning permission to a private property developer.

A full investigation of the grounds to establish the location of the remains of these babies must be completed, followed by sensitive excavation work and the dignified exhumation of any remains found.

This development should not go ahead. Instead the site should be established as a memorial to those who suffered there.

Please acknowledge my submission and advise of any decision made.

Is mise le meas,

Pádraig Rice

TD for Cork South Central