

Ruth Coppinger TD,

Dail Eireann, D2.

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

Ref: An Coimisiún Pleanála - Case reference: LH28.324153, Bessborough, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork

As a public representative, I wish to object to planning permission being granted to demolish buildings and build apartments on the site of a former Mother and Baby home in the above location.

The reason for such an objection but the main reason why this planning permission should not go ahead is laid out below.

1. Unresolved burial site — mass disappearance of children

Planning permission has been refused on this land in 2021 due to concerns about the failure to find all the children buried on the site. Over 900 children died in Bessborough but only 64 graves have been found. I would also state that An Coimisiún Pleanála's own planning inspector noting in his objection to the plan that he could not be satisfied that they wouldn't be building on top of unmarked graves.

A full geophysical survey of the site has not been completed, nothing has changed planning permission should not have been granted to this site.

2. Human right concerns

As noted by leading human rights academics including Dr Maeve O'Rourke, Dr Claire McGettrick, and Dr Máiréad Enright of the Clann Project, the State has not complied with its obligations under European human rights law in respect of the deaths and disappearances of children and women confined at Bessborough.

It has not taken all reasonable means to excavate this site, including such as geophysical surveys using ground-penetrating radar, electrical resistivity or magnetometry.

3. Restrictions on the planning permission is not enough.

The conditions attached to the planning permission do not deal with the concerns raised by survivors, for example if human remains are found all work on the site should stop and reported to relevant authorities is not enough.

This site should be excavated with the express purpose of finding the children buried here. It is not enough for restrictions to be put on this site it should be fully investigated.

4. This should be a protected site

This site should be treated with the respect it deserves while housing valuable it should not be created at the expense of survivors. This site should be protected, and the entire site be preserved as an historical site based on what survivors are asking for.

CONCLUSION

I firmly urge that the board upholds this appeal and refuse planning permission, and the right and desires of survivors are respected. This construction cannot go ahead.

Regards,

Ruth Coppinger TD.