

LRD case number 324153

Observation on this application

Granting permission to demolish Bessborough House and replace it with apartments would be profoundly disrespectful to the thousands of mothers and babies who were incarcerated there.

The mortality rate in childbirth and for infants in Bessborough House was in excess of the mortality rate for the general population at the time. Women and babies were not cared for and did not receive timely medical treatment. Instead, they were forced to work late into their pregnancies, shamed for being pregnant and then forced to give up their babies.

The inhumanity shown to these women and their children continues to shock.

Rather than apartments, there ought to be a place of rest and refuge for women, a place of memoriam for those who passed through the gates, now deceased. An education centre could be built on the site, where generations of visitors could learn more about how women and their fertility was viewed by Church and State in decades past. History can teach so much about cruelty and shame – by sharing this story, instead of concreting over it, every generation can understand and learn to show love and compassion to others. Even today, the telling of these stories is starting to lose impact.

We must ensure that the past is captured and those affected are recognised and respected.

Please do not grant permission for apartments on this site of national cultural importance.

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