hw planning

Planning Statement

Proposed Large-scale Residential Development at

‘The Farm’, Bessborough, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork

Client: Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Limited

December 2025

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Introduction

1.1 Outline of Proposed Development

This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Limited and accompanies a Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) application to the Local Authority regarding a site located at Bessborough, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork, for the following proposed development:

> *"the demolition of 10 no. existing agricultural buildings /sheds and log cabin residential structure and the construction of a residential development of 140 no. residential apartment units over 2 no. retained and repurposed farmyard buildings (A & B) with single storey extension and 3 no. new blocks of 3-5 storeys in height, with supporting resident amenity facilities, crèche, and all ancillary site development works. The proposed development includes 140 no. apartments to be provided as follows: 70 no. 1-bedroom, 12 no. 2-bedroom (3 person), 57 no. 2-bedroom (4 person) and 1 no. 3-bedroom. Block A and Block B will be retained for resident amenities.*
>
> *The proposal includes a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the adjoining Passage West Greenway to the east, connecting into the existing down ramp from Mahon providing direct access to the greenway and wider areas, as well as new pedestrian access to Bessborough Estate to the north including upgrades to an existing pedestrian crossing on Bessboro Road. The proposed development provides for outdoor amenity areas including publicly accessible parkland, landscaping, surface car parking, bicycle parking, bin stores, substation, public lighting, roof mounted solar panels, wastewater infrastructure including new inlet sewer to the Bessborough Wastewater Pumping Station to the west, surface water attenuation, water utility services and all ancillary site development works. Vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided via the existing access road off the Bessboro Road. Part of the proposed development is situated within the curtilage of Bessborough House which is a Protected Structure (Reference: RPS 490).*

1.2 Response to LRD Opinion

An LRD Opinion Meeting was held with Cork City Council on the 29th of October 2025, with the LRD Opinion Report being issued on the 26th of November 2025 (ref LRD25-10). As requested in Item 24 of that Opinion Report:

> *'24. In accordance with Article 22 (2A)(b), of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), the applicant shall include, as part of a full LRD Application, a statement of response to the issues set out in this opinion.'*

A separate Opinion Response Statement prepared by HW Planning accompanies this application. This Planning Statement, however, outlines and considers the principal planning matters, as well as addressing the sole issue highlighted by An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) in their decision to refuse permission for a previous Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application on the application site (ABP-313206-22).

1.3 Response to Commission's Reason for Refusal

On July 23rd, 2025 An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) decided to refuse permission for the proposed 140 no. unit application known as The Farm (ABP-313206-22) for one reason, as outlined below.

- The unit mix proposed does not meet the target levels set out under Table 11.8 the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 Quantum of studio units,

Notwithstanding the applicant's frustration with this refusal grounds, given the application was lodged and due for decision before the 2022 Cork City Development Plan came into force, the recently published Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025) provide clarity on the issue of housing mix. Section 3.2 of these Guidelines specifies the following in relation to housing mix:

> *'In the context of sustainably increasing housing supply, targeting a greater proportion of urban housing development and the broader housing choices enabled by the SRDCSGs, restrictions in statutory plans relating to mix within apartment developments, are not warranted other than in specific circumstances.'*

In addition, Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 1, which takes precedence over all policy guidance in individual Development Plans, has been added and specifies the following:

Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1

(A) **With the exception of social housing developments, social/affordable housing provided for under Part V the Act or schemes to provide housing for older persons where a specific mix of unit sizes may be required, such as in accordance with a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), there shall be no restrictions within statutory plans in relation to the mix of unit sizes or types to be provided within apartment developments. There shall be no minimum or maximum requirements for apartments with a certain number of bedrooms.**

(B) **Where any such restriction or requirement is set out within a statutory plan, this Specific Planning Policy Requirement shall apply to any single apartment scheme and there shall be no restriction in relation to the mix of unit sizes or types and there shall be no minimum requirements for apartments with a certain number of bedrooms within the development, except in the circumstances set out above.**

The provisions of SPPR 1(B) apply to the proposed development. Based on the introduction of the *Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)* the issue the Commission had with housing mix is no longer applicable.

While the Commission refused the previous proposed development for the sole reason highlighted above, their decision and direction indicated that there was nothing else that would preclude a grant

of permission to develop the subject lands having regard to any perceived Mother and Baby Homes estate legacy matters:

- Subject to careful forensic monitoring of ground works, the lands are amenable to be developed in accordance with their residential zoning objectives in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2029.

In assessing the design and layout strategy of The Farm the Inspector at Section 10.7.7 of his report noted:

- The proposed development provides a satisfactory design strategy in terms of overall design and layout, public realm and open space.
- The proposal in conjunction with other phases of development provides for a high degree of accessibility to a large area of recreation/amenity space to the benefit of the wider area with the provision of a number of access points to allow access from the north, east and west.
- The architectural spaces located within, and adjacent the proposed and existing structures are well defined, sufficiently enclosed and use good quality materials and landscaping.

In assessing the City Council's recommended omission of Block C, the Inspector at Section 10.8.11 of his report noted:

> *'I would be of the view that this Block would have a limited impact on the historic parkland setting of the protected structure given it is located to the north of the existing protected structure and adjacent existing structures. The proposal has limited impact in terms of footprint on the parklands area to the west and I consider that an appropriate balance is struck between the providing for an efficient level of development while respecting the architectural heritage value of the Bessbough House and its historical curtilage'.*

Further, the Inspector did not agree with the assessment of Cork City Council that Blocks D and E should be reduced by one storey and in conclusions noted:

> *'the proposal provides for a development that is acceptable in terms of scale, design and layout with adequate regard had to the impact of such on the setting of the existing protected structure and its overall historic landscape. The proposal would have positive visual impact and is of acceptable quality in terms of architectural character and materiality. The CE Report recommendation for amendment is noted, however I am of the view that the proposal is acceptable in the form it has been submitted'.*

Based on the above, the scale, density and height of the development proposed at 'The Farm' was considered appropriate by the Commission. The Housing Mix refusal reason has been superseded by the 2025 Apartment Guidelines. The proposed layout, while fundamentally unchanged, has been modified slightly to align with new Guidelines.

Table 01 - Key Site Statistics

Key Site Statistics	Previous SHD Scheme	Current LRD Proposal
Site Area	5.1 hectares	5.08 hectares
Developable Area	4.28 hectares (including Public Park)	1.46 hectares (excluding proposed Public Park)
No. Units	140 apartments	140 apartments
Mix	70 no. 1-beds 69 no. 2-beds 1 no. 3-beds	70 no. 1-beds 69 no. 2-beds 1 no. 3-beds
Site Coverage	10.5%	30.1%
Plot Ratio	0.3	1
Density	33 dph 27 dph (based on a wider redline area)	95.9 dph (based on a revised developable area reflecting the Compact Settlement Guidelines) 27.5 dph (based on redline area)
Total Public Open Space - within Developable Area - outside of developable area	27,136 m^2 (63 % of total site area)	2,563 (10.6%) within the developable area 24,520m^2 outside the developable area, comprising new parkland.
Creche	25 child space	25 child space
Communal Amenity Space	2,563 m^2	2,563 m^2
Car Parking Spaces	54 + 4 no. creche drop-off spaces	54 + 4 no. creche drop-off spaces
Motor Bike Parking Spaces	5 spaces	5 spaces
Cycle Parking Spaces	230 no. resident spaces and 100 visitor spaces	230 no. resident spaces and 100 visitor spaces

02 //

Site Context and Proposed Development

2.1 Site Context

Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Limited, who are the owners of identified lands at Bessborough, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork, are making this application to Cork City Council for a proposed Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) consisting of the construction of 140 no. build to sell residential apartments, associated supporting uses and ancillary development works.

The lands previously formed part of the Bessborough Estate, which encompassed over 200 acres (80 hectares) of land. In the 1970s Cork City Council compulsory purchased some 140 acres (57 hectares) of the lands which have since been developed as Mahon Industrial Park, LoughMahon Technology Park and Mahon Retail Park and a section of the N40 road. Following the CPO and until recently the Estate was approximately 60 acres (24 hectares) in area.

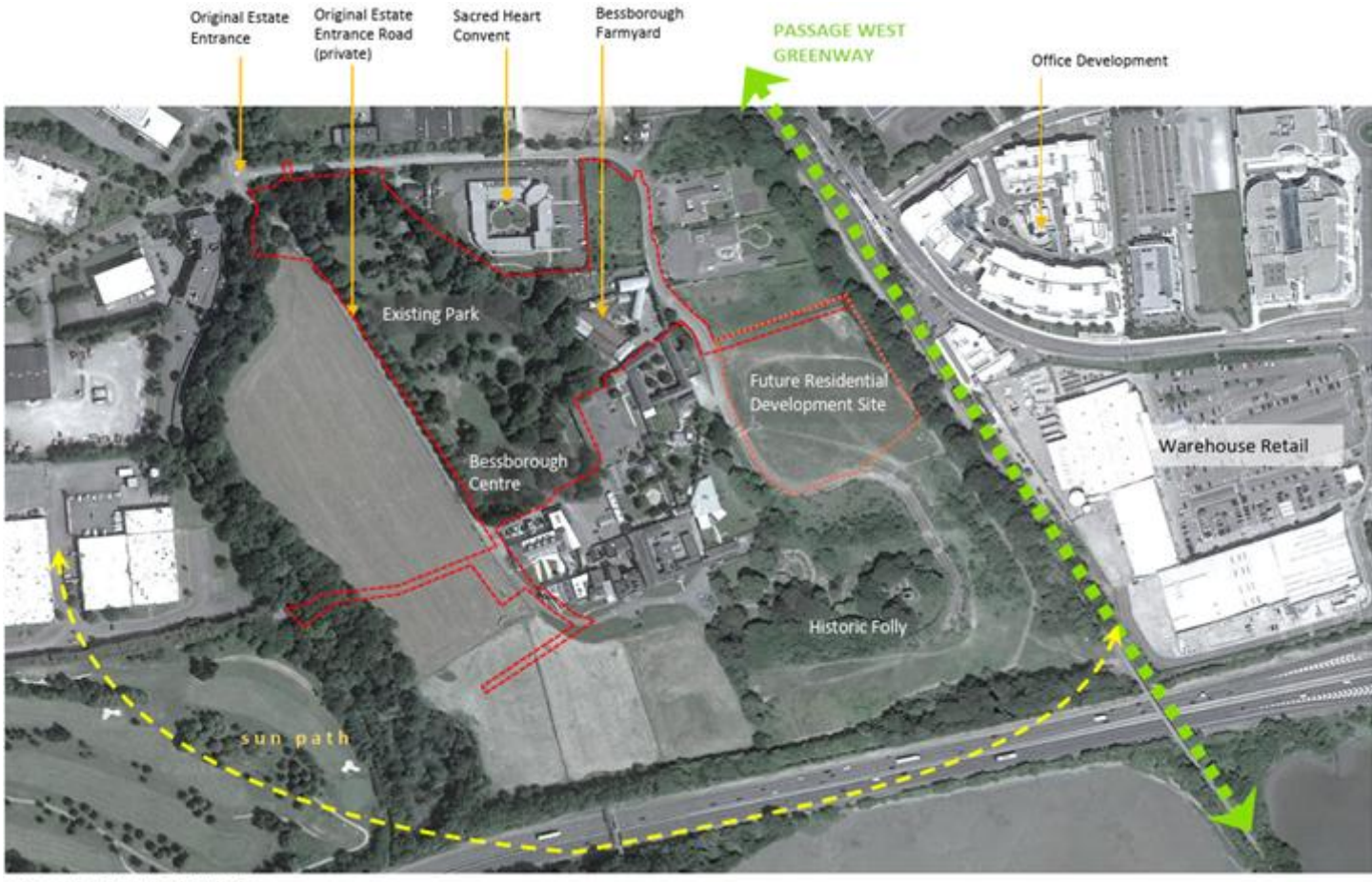


Figure 1 Site Context, based on extract from Ilsa Rutgers Landscape Report

2.2 Site Location

The subject site, which is approximately 5 hectares in area, is located adjacent to Mahon District Centre, within the South-eastern Suburbs of Cork City, as defined in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028. The site is strategically located beside the Passage West Greenway which extends along three sides of Bessboro Estate and benefits from excellent walking and cycling links to the adjacent Mahon District Centre, and key strategic employment areas to the north, east and west. These are among Cork's strongest performing areas in terms of population and employment growth recently, presenting sustainable and viable employment opportunities for existing and future residents of the area.

It is an area earmarked for considerable growth and investment in the coming years. In line with the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS), Cork BusConnects proposals, and the South East Sustainable Transport Corridors Scheme, which includes routes in proximity to the subject lands, serving Jacob's Island and Mahon. In addition, the Preferred Route of the high frequency Cork Luas includes stations in the vicinity of the subject lands.

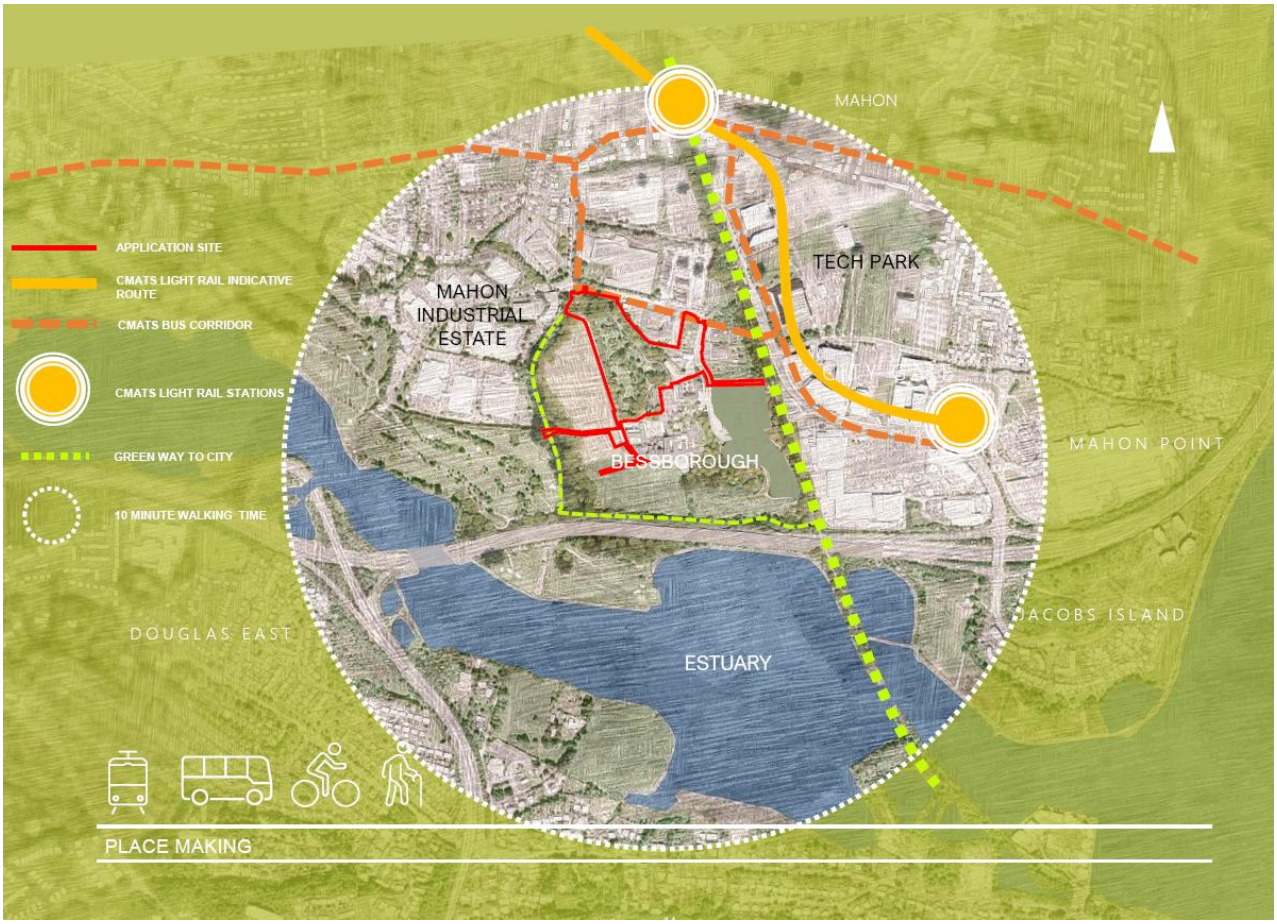


Figure 2 Location Context, extract from ShipseyBarry Deign Statement

2.3 Area Development Context

The development opportunities presented by the 'Mahon Peninsula' have been recognised in successive Cork City Development Plans since 1998 and the current Cork City Development Plan 2022 continues to recognise Mahon as a 'Key Growth Area'.

The Core Strategy identifies Mahon as an area for growth consolidation and enhancement by providing a mix of new neighbourhood uses in suitable and underutilised locations.

The subject lands previously formed part of the 'Bessboro Farm' and parkland in the Bessboro Demesne. The farm element includes a cluster of much-altered farm buildings which in recent decades was the home of 'Cork Heritage Park' which is now closed. The subject lands are located to the north of the estate house and historic core. The majority of the subject site is within the ZO 17 '*Landscape Preservation Zone'* specifically referenced in Table 6.9 of the CDP as '*SE 4 – Bessborough House'* with site specific objectives to:

- To reinstate Historic Landscape;
- To seek use of grounds as a Neighbourhood Park in context of local area plan (H);
- To allow development within the immediate environs to the north of Bessboro House consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site.

Therefore, the governing site-specific objectives allow for development on lands within the immediate environs to the north of Bessboro House, subject to it being consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site. This has been robustly demonstrated as part of the submitted documentation. The remainder of the lands are zoned ZO 01 – 'Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods'.

The principle of the proposed development has been established in relation to the previous SHD application (ABP-313206-22) about which the ACP Inspector stated:

> ***'I** am satisfied that the proposal does comply with the site-specific objectives outlined under Table 16.9.... I am satisfied that the proposed development would be acceptable in the context of land use zoning policy.'*

The Planning Authority has consistently supported development on these lands, with infrastructure including an access road and services to facilitate the further development of estate lands to the north and east being granted planning permission under reference TP 03/27028. These sites were subsequently marketed as 'serviced industrial / employment sites'. The north-east portion of the subject site was identified as one of these serviced sites suitable for future development.

This support was reiterated in the Cork City Council Chief Executive's Report in relation to the recently refused SHD application on-site (ABP-313206-22) in which they recommended that permission should be granted subject to conditions.

2.4 Bessborough Estate Legacy Matters

Any proposed development within the Bessborough Estate must be cognisant of the legacy issues arising from the use of Bessborough House as a Mother and Baby Home between the 1920s and 1990s. However, as evident from the Commission's decision and direction regarding the previous SHD application on-site (ABP-313206-22), they did not have any concerns regarding the potential for a children's burial ground within the subject site. The previous application was refused solely on the grounds of housing mix and the ABP direction stated in respect of any perceived Bessboro Estate legacy matters:

> *'subject to careful forensic monitoring of ground works, the lands are amenable to be developed in accordance with their residential zoning objectives in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2029.'*

While there is no evidence or suggestions of potential burials on the subject lands the applicants recognise the sensitivities associated with the legacy of the former Mother and Baby Home and previously consulted with the Cork Survivors & Supporters Alliance (CSSA) prior to the submission of the SHD application. We understand that the CSSA had no objection to the principle of the proposed development and the applicant's response to the legacy issues associated with the former Mother and Baby Home has been considered appropriate by An Coimisiún Pleanála.

This item is discussed further in Section 5 of this Statement.

2.5 Proposed Development

The proposed development will consist of:

- The demolition of 10 no. existing agricultural buildings /sheds and log cabin residential structure and the construction of a residential development of 140 no. residential apartment units over 2 no. retained and repurposed farmyard buildings (A & B) with single storey extension and 3 no. new blocks of 3-5 storeys in height, with supporting resident amenity facilities, crèche, and all ancillary site development works.
- The proposed development includes 140 no. apartments to be provided as follows: 70 no. 1-bedroom, 12 no. 2-bedroom (3 person), 57 no. 2-bedroom (4 person) and 1 no. 3-bedroom. Block A and Block B will be retained for resident amenities.

The proposal will include a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the adjoining Passage West Greenway to the east, connecting into the existing down ramp from Mahon providing direct access to the greenway and wider areas, as well as new pedestrian access to Bessborough Estate to the north including upgrades to an existing pedestrian crossing on Bessboro Road.

The proposed development provides for outdoor amenity areas including publicly accessible parkland, landscaping, surface car parking, bicycle parking, bin stores, substation, public lighting, roof mounted solar panels, wastewater infrastructure including new inlet sewer to the Bessborough Wastewater Pumping Station to the west, surface water attenuation, water utility services and all ancillary site development works. Vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided via the existing access road off the Bessboro Road. Part of the proposed development is situated within the curtilage of Bessborough House which is a Protected Structure (Reference: RPS 490).

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared for the proposed LRD application.

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Land Use Policy & Objectives

This section of the Report will address the main land use policies and objectives which pertain to the application site, and a more detailed review of National, Regional and Local Planning policy is provided within a separate Statement of Consistency. As is evident from the ACP Decision under reference ABP-313206-22, there are no objections to the principle of the proposed development, and we consider that the proposed scheme is in accordance with the land use policies and objectives of the Cork City Council Development Plan 2022-2028 as the relevant statutory Development Plan for the area.

3.1 Cork City Council Development Plan 2022-2028

3.1.1 Zoning

The subject site is located within an area subject to two zonings:

ZO 17 – *Landscape Preservation Zone,* the objective of which is '*To preserve and enhance the special landscape and visual character of Landscape Preservation Zones'.*
ZO 1 – *Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods*, the objective of which is '*to protect and provide for residential uses and amenities, local services and community, institutional, educational and civic uses.'*

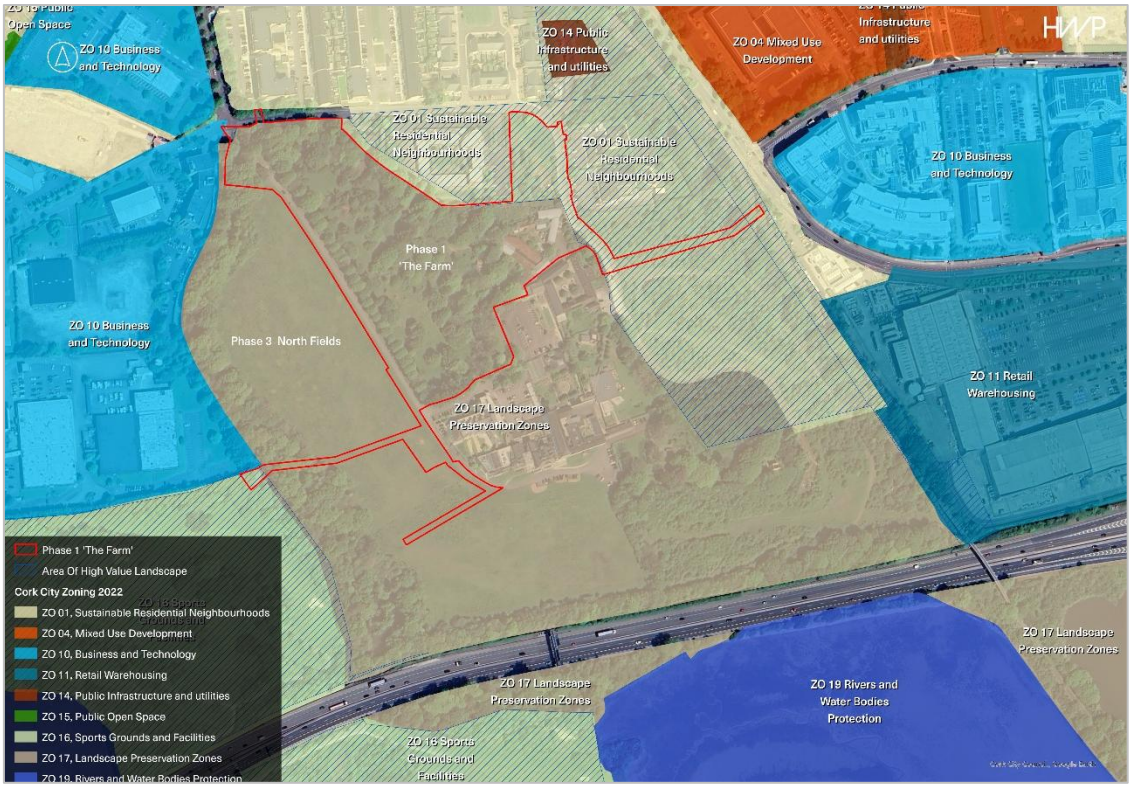


Figure 3 Extract from Map 8 of the Cork City Development Plan with Site Outlined in Red

The ZO 01 lands also fall within an area of High Landscape Value.

3.1.2 Landscape Preservation Zone (LPZ)

The proposed housing element of the proposed development falls within the portion of the site zoned ZO 17. The CDP states that these areas have been identified due to their sensitive landscape character.

Table 02 - Bessborough Landscape Preservation Zone (extracted from Table 6.9, CDP 2022-2028)

Reference	Landscape Preservation Zone (General Name)	Landscape Assets to be protected	Site Specific Objectives
South-East			
SE 4	Bessboro House	J, G, C, B, I	• To reinstate Historic Landscape; • To seek use of grounds as a Neighbourhood Park in context of local area plan (H); • To allow development within the immediate environs to the north of Bessboro House consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site.

In the case of the subject lands the sensitive landscape assets relates to the following categories:

Table 03 - Landscape Asset Categories (Table 6.5, CDP 2022-2028)

Landscape Asset Code	**Landscape Asset Category**
J	Historic Landscapes (including monuments / historic routes)
G	Landmarks / Natural Features / Cultural Landscape – land forming the setting to existing landmark buildings and/or protected structures / buildings of significance
C	Tree Canopy - Areas with existing woodlands or significant tree groups, or areas with potential for new woodlands.
B	Water / River Corridors - rivers, estuary, harbour, The Lough, Atlantic Pond, Docklands, Port of Cork
I	Institutional Open Space

The CDP notes that while there is a presumption against development within LPZs, development is open for consideration where it achieves the site-specific objectives set out in Tables 6.6-6.10. The principle of the proposed development at this location has been accepted by Cork City Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála.

3.1.3 Area of High Landscape Value (AHVL)

Section 6.23 of the CDP sets out that new development in AHLV must '*respect the character and the primacy and dominance of the landscape*'. The CDP set out that there is a presumption against development where it causes significant harm or injury to the intrinsic character of the AHVL.

It should be noted that the design of the proposed development has been landscape-led and directly delivers upon the 3 no. site-specific objectives set out in Tables 6.6-6.10:

01 As outlined in the accompanying Landscape Design Strategy and Masterplan prepared by Ilsa Rutgers Landscape Architects it is the intention of this landscape proposal to re-instate the historic landscape by removing the winding paths and small structures introduced in the park in the 1990's and reinstate the historical paths along the perimeter of the park. It is proposed to re-wild large areas of the park to create wild meadow and rough grass with mowed routes along 'desire lines' rather than hard standing.

Research indicates that the historic landscape was a more open, meadow landscape so it is proposed over the next 20 years to gradually thin out diseased and unwanted trees as they reach the end of their life span and replace these with new native deciduous and evergreen trees along the perimeter and in groups within the field on the western side of the entrance road. This approach is in full compliance with the first site specific objective for the Bessborough LPZ.

02 The Landscape Design Strategy and Masterplan also indicate the applicant's intention is to cede a large area (24,520m2) south of the house to Cork City Council or another stakeholder for use as a Neighbourhood Park. This will directly deliver upon the second site specific objective for the Bessborough LPZ.

03 The subject site is located to the north of Bessborough House and therefore aligns with specific objective 3 to allow development within the immediate environs to the north of Bessborough House consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site.

The success of this sensitive approach to landscape enhancement is evident in the ABP Inspector's report in relation to the previous similar application (ABP-313206-22) in which they stated:

> *'I am satisfied that the proposal does complies with the site-specific objectives outlined under Table 16.9. I would note that a detailed assessment of the overall design and scale of the development in the context of the setting of the existing protected structure and its historic landscape is outlined later in this assessment. Notwithstanding such, I am satisfied that the proposed development would be acceptable in the context of land use zoning policy'.*

3.1.4 Density and Height Strategy

Figure 3.3 of the 2022 CDP (included here as Figure 04) sets out the Council Spatial Density and Building Height Strategy. In it Mahon is identified as a 'Primary Urban Corridor& Principal Town' location. In the Cork City Density and Building Height Standards set out in Table 11.2 of the CDP this location equates to the 'Fringe/Corridor/Centre' category as indicated in Figure 05 below, with prevailing and target densities and heights identified.

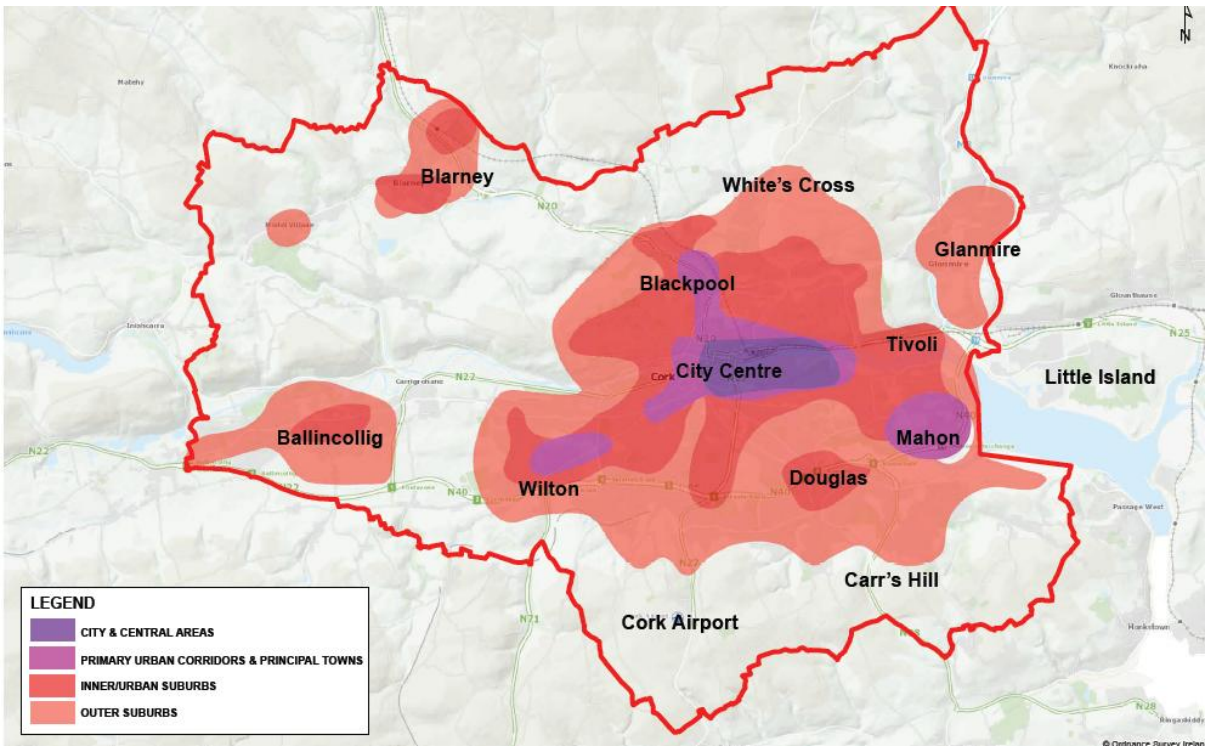


Figure 4 Spatial Density and Building Height Strategy Map - Cork City Development Plan 2022 (Fig 3.3)

Density and Building Heights Strategy	Density					Heights			
	FAR		Dwellings Per Hectare			No. of Storeys			
	Prevailing	Target	Prevailing	Target*		Prevailing		Target	
				Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Fringe / Corridor / Centre	1.0 - 3.5	2.5 - 4+	25 - 100+	50	150	2	6	4	7
City Fringe / Corridor	1.5 - 3.5	2.5 - 4.5	25 - 100	50	150	3	6	5	7
Mahon	0.5 - 3.5	1 - 4	10 - 40	50	120	2	5	4	6
Blackpool	0.5 - 3.0	1 - 4	0 - 40	50	120	2	5	4	6
Wilton	0.5 - 3.5	1 - 4	10 - 25	50	120	2	4	3	5

Figure 5 Extract from CDP Table 11.2 **Table 11.2:** Cork City Density and Building Height Standards.

Based on the above Mahon is identified as having a prevailing density of 10 – 40 units per hectare and a target density of 50 – 120 units per hectare. In terms of height the prevailing height is categorised as between 2-5 storey, with the target height set as between 4-6 storeys.

The proposed development with a height range between 1- 5 storeys and a developable area density of 95.9 units per hectare, falls comfortably within both these ranges.

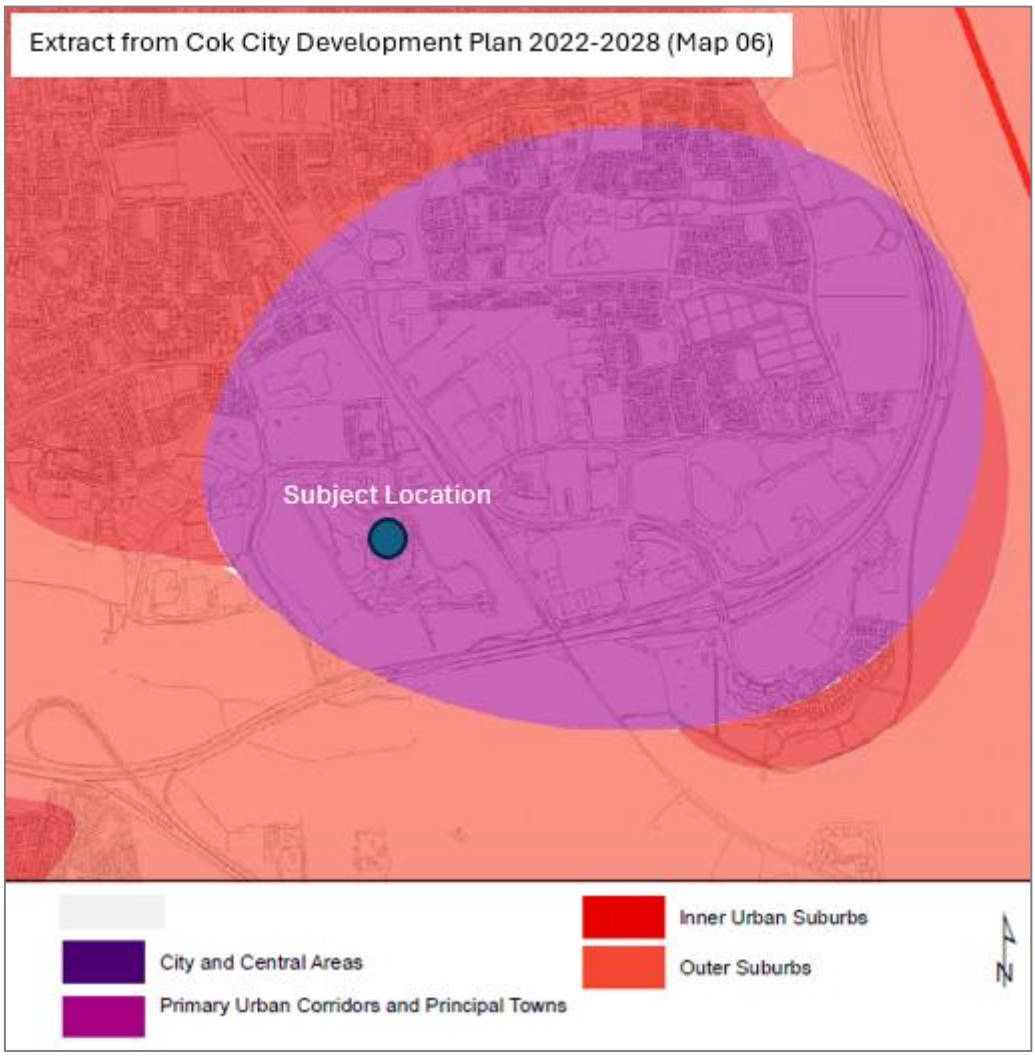


Figure 6 Location of subject site within Mahon 'Primary Urban Corridors and Principal Towns' designation

3.2 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024

3.2.1 Density

Since the previous SHD application, the *Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024 (SRDCSG)* have been published. These establish a tailored approach to density depending on local circumstances. As identified in the CDP Core Strategy, Mahon is located in the South East Suburb of Cork City, so in Table 3.1 of the Guidelines falls within a category 'City – Suburban/Urban Extension', as defined below, where the SRDCSG recommends that densities in the range 40 dph to 80 dph (net) shall generally apply or up to 150 dph at accessible locations.

City - Suburban/Urban Extension

> *Suburban areas are the lower density car-orientated residential suburbs constructed at the edge of cities in the latter half of the 20th and early 21st century, while urban extension refers to the greenfield lands at the edge of the existing built up footprint that are zoned for residential or mixed-use (including residential) development. It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that residential densities in the range 40 dph to 80 dph (net) shall generally be*

applied at suburban and urban extension locations in Dublin and Cork, and that densities of up to 150 dph (net) shall be open for consideration at 'accessible' suburban / urban extension locations (as defined in Table 3.8).

Figure 4 below, extracted from Table 3.8 of the SRDCSG, lists the various types of high-capacity public transport nodes or interchange to which category (iv) applies. Of relevance to this site is the inclusion of 'locations within 500m walking distance of an existing or planned BusConnects *'Core Bus Corridor' stop'* or within 1,000m of a planned high-capacity transport node including light rail.

High Capacity Public Transport Node or Interchange

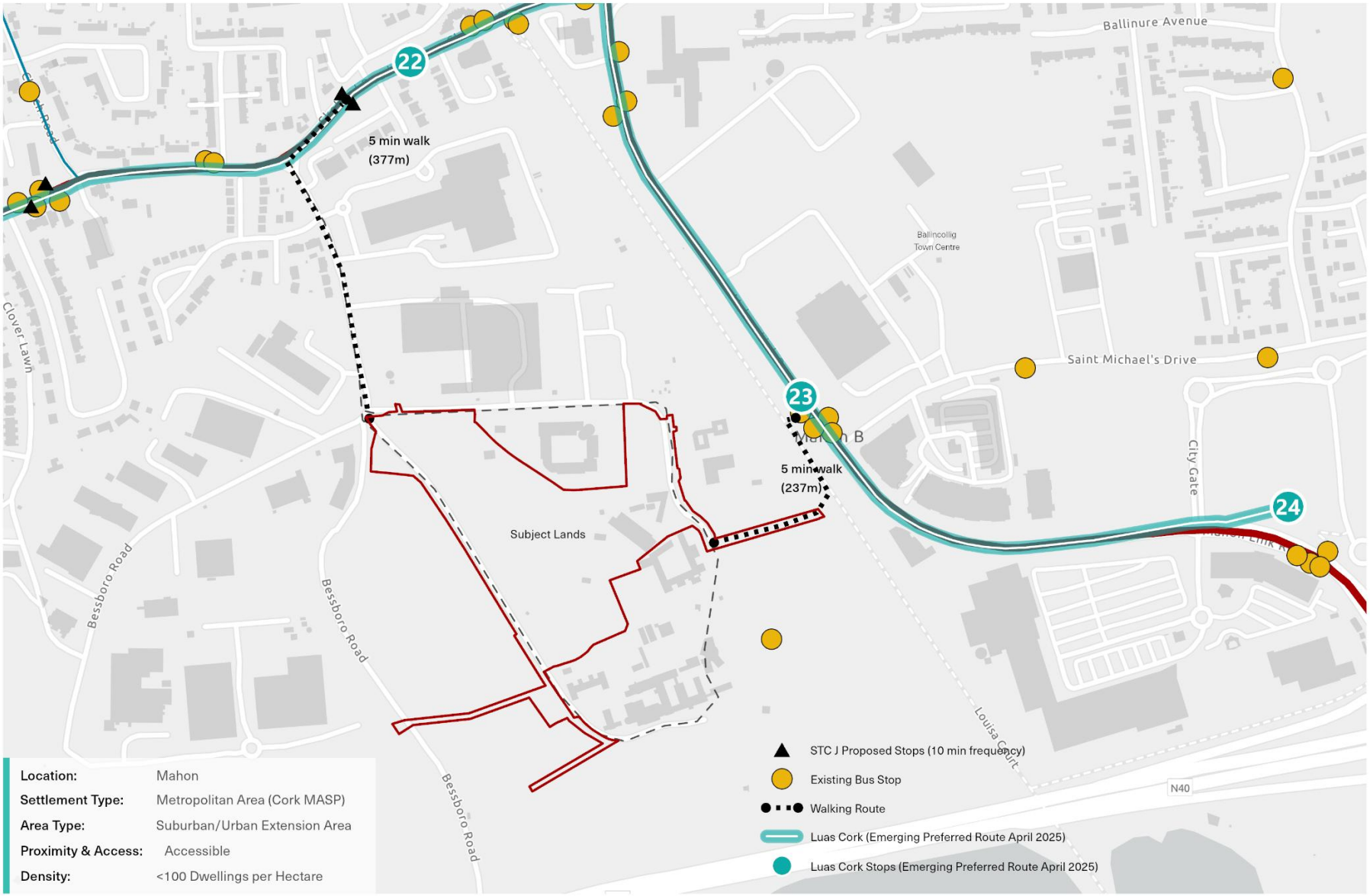
- Lands within 1,000 metres (1km) walking distance of an existing or planned high capacity urban public transport node or interchange, namely an interchange or node that includes DART, high frequency Commuter Rail[11], light rail or MetroLink services; or locations within 500 metres walking distance of an existing or planned BusConnects 'Core Bus Corridor'[12] stop.
- Highest densities should be applied at the node or interchange and decrease with distance.
- 'Planned public transport' in these Guidelines refers to transport infrastructure and services identified in a Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy for the five cities and where a public authority (e.g. National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland or Irish Rail) has published the preferred route option and stop locations for the planned public transport.

Accessible Location

- Lands within 500 metres (i.e. up to 5-6 minute walk) of existing or planned high frequency (i.e. 10 minute peak hour frequency) urban bus services.

Figure 7 Based on Table 3.8 SRDCSG – Accessibility

As highlighted in Figure 5. overleaf, the subject site is within 5 minutes' walk of existing bus stops that are to be retained in the Cork BusConnects STC J route. With the implementation of BusConnects, the site is set to benefit from significant increases in bus service frequency, with a proposed weekday and Saturday midday frequency of 10 minutes. In addition, and as highlighted in Figure 5, the subject site is also within walking distance (c. 250m) of a stop on the proposed Luas Cork, a light rail transit system, as originally indicated in Cork Metropolitan Area Transportation Strategy (CMATS). This proposed stop is also indicated in the Emerging Preferred Route published in 2025. It is proposed that the Cork Luas will operate at a frequency of every 5 minutes.



Location:	Mahon
Settlement Type:	Metropolitan Area (Cork MASP)
Area Type:	Suburban/Urban Extension Area
Proximity & Access:	Accessible
Density:	<100 Dwellings per Hectare

Figure 8 Figure 3.1. SRDCSG – City Suburban/Urban Extension Category

The SRDCSG states that this density range should then be refined based on considerations of centrality and accessibly (Step 1) to services and public transport. Section 3.4.1 of the Guidelines state that:

> *'While densities within the ranges set out will be acceptable, planning authorities should encourage densities at or above the mid-density range at the most central and accessible locations in each area'*
>
> *'Highest densities should be applied at the node or interchange and decrease with distance'.*

In view of the subject site's accessible nature, located in proximity to a BusConnects STC node, we conclude that in line with SRDCSG the planning authority should be encouraging densities at or above the mid-density range between 40 and 150dph, equating to 95 dph (net) which is in line with the standards as set out in the Cork City Development Plan. In Map 06 of the CDP Density and Height Strategy (Volume 2) Mahon falls within the 'Primary Urban Corridors and Principal Towns' which Table 11.2 of Volume 1 sets out should have a target density range of between 50 and 120 dph.

Policy and Objective 3.1 of the Guidelines states that:

> *It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that the recommended residential density ranges set out in Section 3.3 are applied within statutory development plans and in the consideration of individual planning applications, and that these density ranges are refined further at a local level using the criteria set out in Section 3.4 where appropriate.*

Step 2 of 'Refining Density' as set out in Section 3.4.2 of the SRDCSG, sets out that character, amenity and the natural environment should also be taken into consideration in density calculations. Historic environments, such as Bessborough, are specifically referenced as being sensitive to change.

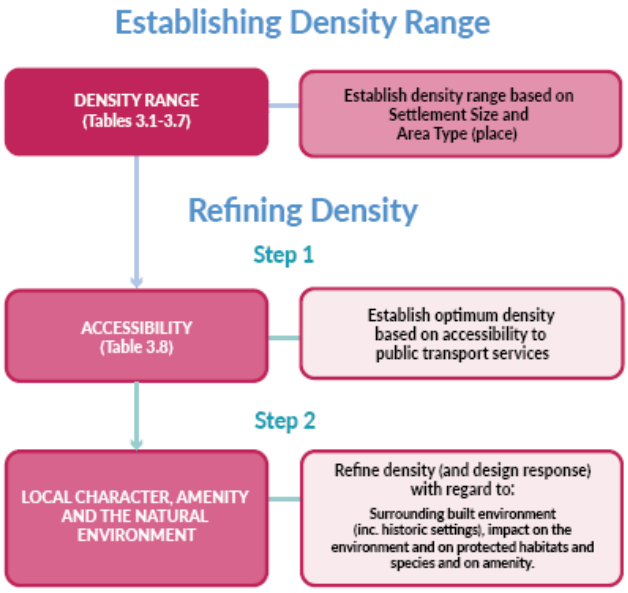


Figure 9 Extract from Figure 3.3 of the SRDCSG

While the subject site is 5 hectares, it has been a long-held objective of the CDP to make provision for a neighbourhood park in the vicinity of the subject site to serve the future community. It is the applicant's intention is to provide a large area (24,520m2) for use as a new public open space park. In line with Appendix B of the SRDCSG the following should not be included within the developable area for calculations of density:

> *'Local parks such as neighbourhood and pocket parks or squares and plaza's'.*

The proposed development at 95.9 dph of the developable areas, based on the methodology defined in the Guidelines is in accordance with the recommendation to achieve densities around the mid-range of 95 dph for City – Suburban/Urban Expansion sites in accessible locations close to existing or planned high-capacity public transport nodes.

In addition, it is noted that the ACP Inspector considered the proposed similar density appropriate in relation to the previous SHD application on-site when they stated:

> *'The nature of this site is somewhat unique with the site zoned mainly a Landscape Protection Zone and features a high degree of existing parkland, which must be factored in when considering density. As outlined above I would consider that in calculating density the 24,520sqm of parkland should not considered ... In this regard I do not consider that the density proposed would be a material contravention of Development Plan policy.'*

We consider therefore that the overall nominal density of proposed development, (27.7 dph based on redline area) is appropriate within zoned as a Landscape Protection Zone, within former institutional lands, where the delivery of a neighbourhood park has been a long-established objective is in line with Objective 5.1. We note that within the developable area, excluding the neighbourhood park, a net density of 95.9 dph is fully in line with the Guidelines.

3.2.2 Public Open Space

Policy and Objective 5.1 - Public Open Space of the SRDCSG set out that:

> *'The requirement in the development plan shall be for public open space provision of not less than a minimum of 10% of net site area and not more than a minimum of 15% of net site area save in exceptional circumstances.'*

The public open space provision within the developable area of the proposed development site is within this range at 10.6%. This, however, excludes the 24,520m2 proposed neighbourhood park which wil be a significant amenity. The SRDCSG make provision for situations such as this in Objective 5.2 when they state that:

> '*in the case of sites that contain significant heritage, landscape or recreational features and sites that have specific nature conservation requirements, a higher proportion of public open space may need to be retained. The 10-15% range shall not therefore apply to new development in such areas'.*

3.2.3 Responsive Built Form

We note that Section 3.4.2 of the SRDCSG indicates:

> *"While it is not necessary to replicate the scale and mass of existing buildings, as most urban areas have significant capacity to accommodate change, it will be necessary to respond in a positive and proportionate way to the receiving context through site responsive design."*

The design of the proposed development has therefore been influenced by the following site characteristics and local context:

- The need to minimise any impacts on the adjoining Bessborough House, protected structure and
- The need to respond positively to the Landscape Preservation zoning.
- The requirement to make efficient use of zoned, accessible and serviced lands.

We note that the Cork City Council's Chief Executive's report, in relation to the previous SHD application on-site, raised no issues regarding the overall quality of layout and urban design.



Figure 10 Height Strategy – extracted from Shipsey Barry Design Statement

The CDP height strategy for the Mahon area sets a target range between 4 storeys and 6 storeys. The proposed heights largely align with, with lower heights proposed in the vicinity of existing heritage buildings. The enclosed Daylight/Sunlight Assessment prepared by DK Partnership concludes that the proposed development is in full compliance with the Daylight/Sunlight standards. Given the proximity to the heritage buildings, the ABP Inspector assessed the proposal against the criteria set out under section 3.2 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines and concluded that the proposal meets the criteria.

The Cork City Council's Chief Executive's report in relation to the previous SHD on-site raised concern regard the building height of Blocks D and E and the encroachment of Block C into the historic landscape. The Council recommended that one-storey be removed from Block D and Block E and Block C be omitted. However, the ACP Inspector considered that:

'the proposal provides for a development that is acceptable in terms of scale, design and layout with adequate regard had to the impact of such on the setting of the existing protected structure and its overall historic landscape. The proposal would have positive visual impact and is of acceptable quality in terms of architectural character and materiality. The CE Report recommendation for amendment is noted, however I am of the view that the proposal is acceptable in the form it has been submitted'.

Overall, we consider that the proposed layout integrates well with its context and provides appropriate transitions with adjacent heritage buildings and structures as accepted by An Coimisiún Pleanála in their assessment of the previous scheme on the site. Based on recent changes to policy context, the site's accessibility and proximity to services we consider that the urban design and architectural approach, are the most appropriate means of achieving the sustainable development of this previous institutional site.

It is considered that the proposed development therefore represents a "Responsive Built Form" and successfully addresses the questions posed in the Design Checklist - Key Indicators of Quality Design and Placemaking' as set out in Appendix D of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024.

3.3 Planning Design Standards for New Apartments: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2025

These guidelines supersede the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments guidelines, originally published in 2015 and revised in 2022 and 2023. The new Guidelines are predicated on the National Planning Framework – First Revision's (2025) projection that approximately 50,000 additional households per annum need to be delivered to 2040. The delivery of apartments at central and accessible urban locations is critical to the achievement of this target. The Guidelines aim to strike a balance in ensuring that apartment development meets the needs of society in terms of standards and quality, while recognising that the economic viability of such developments is crucial to promoting an increased level of output overall. These Guidelines establish standards in relation to the following, compliance with which is addressed in the table below:

- Apartment mix;
- Internal space standards for different types of apartments;
- Dual aspect ratios;
- Floor to ceiling heights;
- Apartments to stair/lift core ratios;
- Storage spaces; and
- Amenity spaces including balconies/patios.

Section 3.2 of these Guidelines specifies the following in relation to housing mix:

'In the context of sustainably increasing housing supply, targeting a greater proportion of urban housing development and the broader housing choices enabled by the SRDCSGs, restrictions in statutory plans relating to mix within

apartment developments, are not warranted other than in specific circumstances.'

In addition, Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1, which takes precedence over all policy guidance in individual Development Plans, specifies that with the exception of Part V provision or schemes for the elderly, no restrictions will be included in statutory plans in relation to housing mix.

As noted previously based on the above the sole refusal grounds raised by the Commission in relation to housing mix is no longer applicable. Therefore the housing mix in the revised scheme remains unaltered.

As described in the accompanying Design Statement other minor adjustments have been made to building lines to allow the unit area compliance to be met under the revised 25% standard set out in the New Apartments: Guidelines. There are:

- No changes to block heights
- No changes to unit mix
- No changes to scale or massing

However, there has been a reduction by 60cm in the width of blocks D and E and a 35 cm increase in width of Block C.

04 //

Proposed Design Alterations

Other than the minor amendments noted in Section 3.3 above, the principal alterations to the proposed scheme have their genesis in the LRD S247 Meeting with the Council in August 2024 and subsequent follow-up meetings with the City Architect's Office.

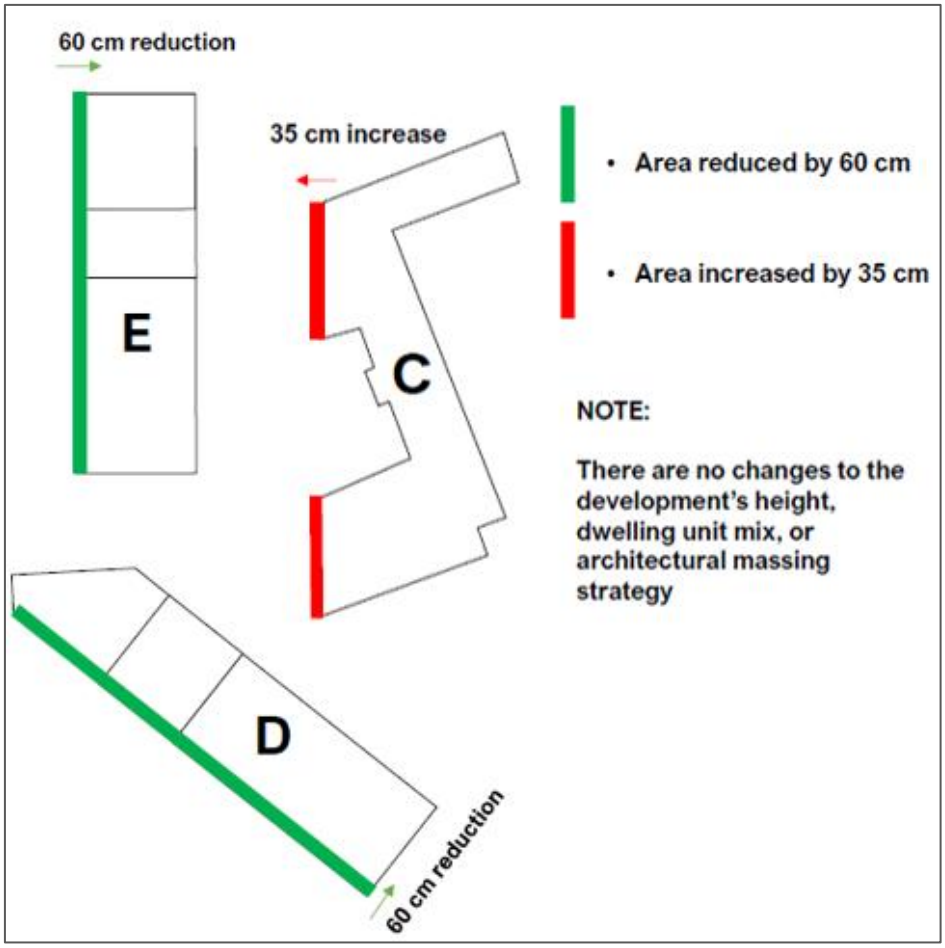


Figure 11 Summary revisions to proposed buildings

The most substantive of these relates to the re-location of the pedestrian bridge to the Greenway. The Council requested that the bridge be repositioned to the north-east corner of the Meadows site. Revised design detail on was shared with the Council in November 2025 who confirmed their satisfaction on same. This change improves wayfinding and integration with the revised preliminary Meadows layout.



Figure 12 Proposed bridge over greenway to east

05 //

Cultural Heritage Legacy Considerations

5.1 Cultural Heritage Context

While the Commission refused the previous proposed development for the sole reason of housing mix their decision and direction indicated that in respect of any perceived Bessborough Estate legacy matters that:

- Subject to careful forensic monitoring of ground works, the lands are amenable to be developed in accordance with their residential zoning objectives in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2029.

The enclosed Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) includes a comprehensive cultural heritage assessment prepared by John Cronin and Associates[1]. The assessment includes archaeology, built heritage and cultural heritage legacy based on a detailed programme of desktop research, site inspection and assessment of the potential impacts of the development proposals. It concludes that based on the completed assessment, there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development site contains any legacy matters associated with the former Mother and Baby Home.

Notwithstanding the above findings and having regard to the findings of the Commission and the concerns of survivors and their families, a precautionary approach is proposed in respect of the development of the subject lands. As detailed in Section 5.3 it is recommended that a programme of archaeological supervision/monitoring of all ground works be undertaken by a suitably-qualified forensic archaeologist. The parameters for this work will be defined by means of a prescriptive method statement which will be prepared by a Forensic Archaeologist, who is familiar with the Bessborough Estate and the Mother and Baby Home Commission of Investigation

5.2 Historical Background

Planning History in Bessborough Estate

The lands previously formed part of the Bessborough Estate, which as highlighted on the Site Planning History Overview map[2], encompassed over 200 acres (80 hectares) of land until Cork City Council compulsory purchased some 140 acres (57 hectares) in the 1970s. Following the CPO and until recently the Estate was approximately 60 acres (24 hectares) in area. As evidenced, the map demonstrates that the majority of the land, which formed part of the Estate prior to the CPO in the 1970s has been developed for office, retail, industrial and residential uses. There have been more than 60 planning applications in this time, with no fewer than 21 applications within the redrawn Bessborough Estate (Post CPO) alone since the year 2000. It follows that there has been substantial

[1] Chapter 10
[2] See Appendix A

permitted and constructed development in Bessborough Estate in recent history with no evidence of unrecorded burial sites on associated lands.

Based on a review of ABP-308790-20[3], the fundamental difference between the lands to the north and west of the folly and all others in the former estate is the existence of an OS revision trace map produced in 1949/1950. This trace map was presented by the Cork Survivors and Supporters Alliance (CSSA) at the oral hearing on ABP-308790-20 and accompanied their objection to the application. The CSSA consider that this trace map indicates the potential presence or a burial ground at that specific location. This was the principal focus of the oral hearing and subsequent decision by An Bord Pleanála. There is no evidence to suggest burial within the subject lands which we consider are no different to those which have been previously developed in the former 200 acre estate. As highlighted above consultation with the CSSA has confirmed that they have no objection to the principle of development on the subject lands.

Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes

Bessborough House functioned as a Mother and Baby Home from the time of its purchase by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in 1922 through to the 1990s. No complete records of deaths are known to exist for the Bessborough Home and burial records for both mothers and babies who died at Bessborough appear to not have been kept.

The 5th Interim report of the Commission of Investigation was published in March 2019 and Section 4.28 stated the following in relation to burials at Bessborough:

> ***The Commission considers that it is highly likely that burials did take place in the grounds of Bessborough. In particular, during the 1940s (when many of the deaths occurred) and when petrol was scarce it would have been very expensive to arrange off-site burials. However, as no physical evidence of possible locations was found, the Commission did not consider it feasible to excavate 60 acres not to mention the rest of the former 200 acre estate.***

In March 2020, the CSSA made a formal submission to the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation. Their submission was divided into two parts: (a) the Law on Burials and (b) the Children's Burial Ground at Bessborough.

In relation to the Law on Burials, the CSSA states that the Congregation had a clear legal obligation to provide a decent and dignified burial, to record the locations of the graves, to facilitate the involvement of grieving mother and family members in the burial of their children and to facilitate access thereafter to the graves for relatives. The CSSA submission also states that the Congregation is "*in breach of its duties by continuing failure to disclose the location of the children's graves*" Finally they state that none of the international recognised human rights around burial have been respected.

The Commission tried to establish where the Bessborough children were buried. Cartographic and landscape assessment was undertaken of possible unrecorded burial arrangements in the Bessborough grounds. A site survey was also conducted. It is clear that there are a number of locations within the grounds where burials could have taken place. However, there is no

[3] Which relates to development on lands to the east of Bessborough House in separate ownership.

significant surface evidence of systematic burial anywhere except for the congregation burial ground.

In their final report, published in October 2020, the Commission made a number of recommendations. Chapter 18 of the Commission's Final Report deals specifically with Bessborough and presents the findings of research and observations of the Commission on the institution there. The chapter includes evidence of former Bessborough residents, and the chapter is also supplemented with statistical analysis. The Final Report did not elaborate nor provide any further evidence or opinion on burials at Bessborough.

On February 26th, 2022 the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary issued a statement and a two part assessment of the burial ground at Bessborough, Cork. This included an archaeological assessment prepared Eachtra Heritage and a report on '*The Burial History of Bessborough Mother and Baby Home'* prepared by Dr. Aoife Breathnach. Both reports were made publicly available through the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary website at http://www.sacredheartsjm.org/independent-historical-and-archaeological-report-burials-bessborough-2022.

The archaeological assessment prepared by Eachtra Heritage reaches the following conclusions:

1. *This is the first archaeological assessment of the burial ground at Bessborough not related to a planning application or hearing.*
2. *The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation did an archaeological review of Bessborough burial practices but no report was published so we cannot assess their work. We can say that the Commission discount the cartographic evidence that the children's burial ground was mapped and labelled in 1949–50.*
3. *The proposal that the children's burial ground was in the field north of the avenue was of value. We have assessed this hypothesis but believe all of the evidence points to the children's burial ground being in the enclosure attached to the folly.*
4. *We conclude that the enclosure attached to the folly is the feature around which the map label 'Children's Burial Ground' pivots. We note the map label is in two different locations on two different editions of the 1949–50 Revision map.*
5. *Annotations on the 1950 OS trace map are difficult to read but one potential reading includes the letters Ch which could refer to children. However, we do not have high confidence in our reading.*
6. *We favour the hypothesis that there was only ever one burial ground in Bessborough and that it contains both children and nuns.*
7. *We combine Dr Aoife Bhreatnach's work with that of the Commission of Investigation to suggest that children were buried here for a short period when the city-wide 'unclaimed dead' 'burial system was overwhelmed. The duration of the period of overwhelm is not known.*
8. *Analysis of nun's grave markers in Bessborough burial ground shows a tight sequence of burials which avoid two areas in the burial ground. We believe these two areas have potential to be where the children were buried. Alternatively the children and the nuns may be buried in the same areas of the burial ground.*

The assessment contain two recommendations, the first is that Non-invasive geophysical survey of the burial ground (Area 1), and Area 2 are recommended, which are located immediately to the north and to the south west of The Folly. The second recommendation is that a UAV/Drone mounted LiDAR survey of the broader Bessborough estate is carried out.

At a site meeting held in June 2021 between representatives of the CSSA and the applicant, the CSSA outlined the area of concern in detail and communicated their aspirations for a memorial location currently outside the CSSA and applicant's control. The area of principal concern to the CSSA focusses around the Folly and does not include the Masterplan lands.

During the site inspection, the CSSA re-iterated their position as not being opposed to development on the wider lands at Bessborough, stating that the proposed development locations ('The Farm' and 'The Meadows') were not of direct concern to their sensitivities.

There is no evidence to suggest that there are any burials on the subject lands and while the issue of the burials at Bessborough remains unresolved, there is now a consensus between the primary stakeholders that any unrecorded burials were likely to have taken place within or adjacent to The Folly. Based on this we consider that the subject lands are similar in profile to all other lands within the former 200 acre Bessborough Estate, the majority of which have been successfully developed.

5.3 Proposed Approach

It should be noted that an EIAR has been prepared to accompany the subject application and that matters related to cultural heritage are now contained in Chapter 10 of this report.

Cultural Heritage Assessment

The potential for unrecorded burial sites on the subject lands has been subject to detailed assessment by John Cronin & Associates, the summary findings of which are as follows:

- Cartographic Mapping: Available cartographic sources dating from the 17th century onward were reviewed. Relevant extracts from the reviewed sources are presented within the EIAR. Independent of the previously referenced lands north of the north and west of the folly, there is no evidence of potential burial locations in the estate.

- Aerial/Satellite/LiDAR Imagery: Aerial photographic coverage of the subject area produced for the Irish Air Corps in 1951 provides a very clear overview of the lands in the mid-twentieth century. Nothing of archaeological interest or potential is evident or visible with the proposed development area. Aerial photography from the 2000s confirms the lands were heavily disturbed when a roadway and public sewer were constructed through the development area.

- Archaeological Testing: A programme of archaeological test trenching was carried out under licence (Excavation Licence 19E0003) within the subject site in early 2019 by John Cronin & Associates. The programme of testing showed the area was heavily disturbed and nothing of an archaeological nature was identified. No remains of human burial were encountered.

- Field Surveys: The subject lands were inspected in January 2022. No constraints were encountered during the inspection and all areas of the proposed development were accessible. The completed survey work did not identify any specific potential for unrecorded burial sites.

Based on the completed assessment, there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development site contains any burials associated with the former Mother and Baby Home. As outlined, the archaeological testing of the subject site conducted in early 2019 found no features or remains of note in any of the test trenches excavated on the footprint of the proposed development. These investigations were supervised by a human bone specialist.

Recommendations

Notwithstanding the above findings and having regard to the findings of the Commission and the concerns of survivors and their families, a precautionary approach is proposed in respect of the development of the subject lands. It is recommended that a programme of archaeological supervision/monitoring of all ground works be undertaken by a suitably-qualified forensic archaeologist. The parameters for this work have been defined by means of a prescriptive method statement which has been prepared by Aidan Harte, Forensic Archaeologist, who is familiar with the Bessborough Estate and the Mother and Baby Home Commission of Investigation[4]. It is recommended that the specified forensic archaeological monitoring controls be secured by way of the following planning condition:

> *The proposed development shall be subject to forensic archaeological monitoring and all ground disturbance shall be monitored at all times by at least one Forensic Archaeologist and one Osteo- archaeologist/Forensic Anthropologist with previous experience of forensic controls. A lead Forensic Archaeologist shall be appointed and the method of systematic forensic monitoring shall be informed by the methods successfully implemented by the Commission for the Location of Victims Remains (ICLVR).*
>
> *All personnel conducting the forensic archaeological monitoring will at all times conduct themselves with an awareness of contamination issues (e.g. agreed routes of access and protective clothing) All tools and equipment shall be decontaminated prior to arrival on site, and subsequently at regularly intervals to avoid cross-contamination throughout a given monitoring programme. Any evidential items shall be recorded and collected in adherence with forensic protocol.*
>
> *Contemporaneous logs of personnel, decisions and actions, and evidence collected must be maintained. Similarly, the record of stratigraphy and features of interest are made on a contemporaneous and continuous basis.*
>
> *Prior to the commencement of development a dedicated liaison shall be appointed to liaise with the Bessborough Mother and Baby Home survivor group/s to provide details and updates regarding the forensic monitoring and subsequent reporting.*
>
> *In advance of any ground disturbance a comprehensive desktop review must be completed by the Lead Forensic Archaeologist. This shall include all documentary and cartographic material, and review of any relevant witness statements.*

[4] A copy of this method is enclosed in Appendix B.

i. This desktop review shall select specified areas where there is a high potential for unrecorded burials.

ii. Any such areas shall be subject to a Geophysical Survey and UAV/Drone mounted LiDAR survey to be conducted at an appropriately high resolution.

iii. Following the completion of the desktop review and Geophysical Survey and UAV/Drone mounted LiDAR surveys if required, identified areas of interest should be divided into operational zones and monitored using a priority-based approach.

Prior to the commencement of any development the site shall be secured with secure fencing to prevent access by unauthorised personnel.

Soil shall be removed systematically using an appropriate mechanical excavator while monitored by at least one Forensic Archaeologist and one Osteo-archaeologist/Forensic Anthropologist.

Where items of evidential value are noted, a completed record must be made prior to it being logged and removed. The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth shall be informed.

The soil removed by excavation (termed 'spoil') shall be placed on a designated surface and spread out for further examination. Using detection devices, this spoil shall again be searched, and a representative sample sieved for bone fragments and other evidence indicative of burial activity. Where fragmented or small material is recovered by these techniques the excavation must cease, and only once it can be confidently deemed void of human remains, should the forensic monitoring continue.

Should human remains be identified in situ, all works shall cease and the Cork City Coroner and An Garda Síochána shall be notified. The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth shall also be informed. A protective buffer shall be implemented surrounding the potential burial. Machinery or vehicles shall not traverse the area.

Should fragmentary or disarticulated human remains be identified ex situ, then that area of monitoring shall cease, the area secured, and the Coroner and An Garda Síochána informed immediately. The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth shall also be informed.

On completion of each phase of forensic monitoring, the lead Forensic Archaeologist shall communicate their finding in writing to The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

A full report and archive of all searches carried out and the results of same shall be lodged with The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and publicly-accessible archives (such as Cork City and County Archives). A copy of the full report shall also be provided to Cork City Council.

Rationale

The suggested approach is justified on the basis of the following:

- Based on the assessment undertaken, there is no suggestion that there are any unrecorded burials on the subject lands.
- Irrespective of this, all ground works will be subject to strict forensic monitoring by a qualified forensic archaeologist (supported by an Osteo-archaeologist/Forensic Anthropologist), as informed by the specialist methodology which is submitted with this application.
- The CSSA have confirmed that they are not opposed to development on the subject lands. As specified in the method statement, and in acknowledgement of survivors, a dedicated liaison will be appointed to help address any concerns they may have about the forensic monitoring and subsequent reporting.
- Based on the submitted method statement, there exists a clear protocol for forensic monitoring and reporting to the highest standard, which will be independent and beyond reproach.

5.4 Consideration of Planning and Legal Implications

Legal

While not common the discovery of human remains during the development of lands has and does occur. At present there is a legal framework for dealing with such occurrences. In the unlikely scenario where human remains are discovered as a result of development, any such discoveries will must be reported to An Garda Síochána, and referred to the Coroner under in accordance with the Coroner's Act 1962. There is an existing and clear legal basis for this, a procedure that has been applied in a number of recent development projects. A sample recent precedent case in this regard is former Nancy Spain's Public House on Barrack Street, Cork which was for housing development where:

- Human skeletal remains were revealed during licensed archaeological monitoring of ground reductions.
- Following the revealing of the skeletal remains, the relevant area of the development site was immediately cordoned off and excluded from construction work activities.
- An osteoarchaeologist completed an assessment of findings in the discovery area, verifying the presence of human remains.
- The discovery was reported to An Garda Siochana, the City Coroner and Cork City Archaeologist.
- A method statement was drafted for approval by the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland[5], followed by a programme of archaeological excavation to fully expose, appropriately record and remove all human skeletal remains.

As highlighted above, the Institutional Burial Act 2022 was approved by Government on February 22nd, 2022 and commenced as The Institutional Burial Act 2022 on 1st July 2022. The Act seeks to ensure that the remains of those who died in residential institutions, and who were buried in a manifestly inappropriate manner, may be recovered and re-interred in a respectful and appropriate way. The Act places the responsibility for this on the Government and provides for the establishment of an Office of Director of Authorised Intervention.

[5] In this case, the remains determined to be historic and were likely in-situ, in the context of their discovery, for a period in excess of 70 years

The Office of Director of Authorised Intervention will be established where the Government are satisfied that based on available evidence inappropriate burial have taken place on lands associated with an institution. The evidence includes any expert technical reports or other reliable information in respect of the burials and any reliable and corroborated statement made by a person with knowledge of the burials concerned. The functions of the Office of Director of Authorised Intervention include the excavation and recovery of human remains buried in a manifestly inappropriate manner.

Within all this, the Act underlines the importance of a forensic based approach to intervention.

> *The excavation, recovery and analysis of remains requires specialised, distinct skillsets. It is critical that that this work is undertaken at a forensic-standard by appropriately qualified individuals so that any evidence recovered is sufficient to satisfy legal requirements in relation to the identification of remains.*

The proposed approach is consistent with this, and the final adoption of the Institutional Burials Act will further underpin the legal framework governing the proposed approach and provide clarity regarding the responsibility for the investigation of unrecorded burials within former institutions. However, any such investigations will require evidence in the form of expert technical reports, similar to the reports it is proposed to prepare prior to any ground disturbance.

Planning

The inclusion of conditions on a grant of planning permission is governed by Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and there are no statutory provisions contained therein which preclude the imposition of the suggested condition.

The Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007 state that planning conditions can be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and for the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. At the highest level, the objectives of the planning system are best served when the power to attach conditions to a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair and practicable. In drafting conditions, it is contingent that they are tailored to tackle specific points of planning consideration.

We submit that the proposed condition meets the criteria-based tests established in the guidelines for its imposition:

- The proposed condition is precise. It is clearly understandable and there is clarity at the outset regarding what the developer must do exactly. It establishes a defined sequence of certain actions related to monitoring of ground works and steps to be taken in the event of discovery of items of evidential value.
- The proposed condition is reasonable. The applicant accepts that there are sensitivities associated with the former use of the Bessborough Estate and they are happy in principle with undertaking the specified works having regard to these sensitivities. The condition can be complied with based on both existing and forthcoming legal provisions. The application of this condition is also reasonable in respect of the treatment of the applicant on the basis that there is no evidence of unrecorded burials on the subject lands and large parts of the former estate have been developed in recent times without the need for such forensic monitoring controls.
- The proposed condition is enforceable. It is effective insofar that it prescribes clear and sequenced actions and when they should come into effect. A forensic approach is proposed as

advocated in The Institutional Burial Act 2022. As per the submitted methodology, it includes oversights and reporting outcomes.

Based on the foregoing, a robust approach has been taken to the consideration of the findings of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes with regard to the potential for unrecorded burial sites within the wider Bessborough estate lands. As outlined, there is no evidence to suggest that there are any unrecorded burials on the subject lands and a consensus now exists amongst stakeholders that any such burials took place some distance for the subject site within or adjacent to The Folly.

Notwithstanding this, and as part of a precautionary approach, it is recommended that a programme of archaeological supervision/monitoring of all ground works be undertaken by a suitably qualified forensic archaeologist. The parameters for this work have been defined by means of a method statement which will ensure that it will be to the highest standard, independent and beyond reproach. An appropriately worded planning condition has been drafted to secure this work, which is underpinned by a legal framework. This condition meets accepted tests for its imposition and is precise, reasonable and enforceable.

06 //

Environmental Impact Assessment

The enclosed Environmental Impact Assessment Report has been prepared for this application. It includes a detailed assessment of all environmental matters pertaining to the site and confirms the ACP Inspector's view in relation to the previous Farm SHD application (ABP-313206-22) that "the proposed development would have acceptable effects on the environment".

The EIAR contains the following chapters:

- Volume 1 - Non-Technical Summary
- Volume 2 – Main Report

1. Introduction
2. Project Description
3. Alternatives Considered
4. Landscape & Visual Impact
5. Material Assets – Traffic & Transportation
6. Material Assets – Services, Infrastructure & Utilities
7. Land & Soils
8. Water (Hydrology & Hydrogeology)
9. Biodiversity
10. Cultural Heritage
11. Noise & Vibration
12. Air Quality
13. Climate Change
14. Population & Human Health
15. Interaction of Impacts
16. Summary of Mitigation Measures & Monitoring

- Volume 3 - Appendices

As a proposed residential development, the subject scheme falls within the category of an 'Infrastructure Project' under Schedule 5 (10) (b) of the Planning and Development Regulations, which provides that a mandatory EIA must be carried out for projects including:

> *(i) Construction of more than 500 dwellings.*
>
> *(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.*

The overall land holding exceeds 10 hectares and the applicant has development intentions for 3 no. phases (a total of 620 units) on the collective area as set out in the submitted masterplan, which includes the delivery of a new Neighbourhood / Remembrance Park to the south of Bessboro House. The requirement to prepare an EIAR was screened in on this basis. The EIAR considers interactions between the proposed development 'The Farm' and the emerging design for 'The Meadows' as well as potential future 'The North Fields' schemes based on available information for these projects at the time of writing. The findings of the submitted EIAR confirms that the proposed development will not result in any significant impacts on the local environment.

07 //

Other Matters

7.1 Statement on Housing Mix

As outlined earlier in this report, the proposed housing mix of 70 no. 1-beds; 69 no. 2-beds and 1 no. 3-bed is compliant with planning policy.

The Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025) provide clarity on housing mix requirements. Section 3.2 of these Guidelines specifies the following in relation to housing mix:

> *'In the context of sustainably increasing housing supply, targeting a greater proportion of urban housing development and the broader housing choices enabled by the SRDCSGs, restrictions in statutory plans relating to mix within apartment developments, are not warranted other than in specific circumstances.'*

In addition, Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 1, which takes precedence over all policy guidance in individual Development Plans, has been added and specifies the following:

Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1

(A) **With the exception of social housing developments, social/affordable housing provided for under Part V the Act or schemes to provide housing for older persons where a specific mix of unit sizes may be required, such as in accordance with a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), there shall be no restrictions within statutory plans in relation to the mix of unit sizes or types to be provided within apartment developments. There shall be no minimum or maximum requirements for apartments with a certain number of bedrooms.**

(B) **Where any such restriction or requirement is set out within a statutory plan, this Specific Planning Policy Requirement shall apply to any single apartment scheme and there shall be no restriction in relation to the mix of unit sizes or types and there shall be no minimum requirements for apartments with a certain number of bedrooms within the development, except in the circumstances set out above.**

The provisions of SPPR 1(B) apply to the proposed development meaning SPPR 1 supersedes any stated housing mix requirements within statutory development plans, including the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

Based on the highlighted text in Section 3.2 of the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025), the underlying intent behind the inclusion of SPPR 1 is clear, namely (1) to increase housing supply, (2) provide more 'urban housing', and (3) deliver broader housing choices in such areas. The proposed housing mix will directly deliver on these aspirations having regard to the following demographic and socio-economic analysis:

- In the 2022 Census of Population Mahon had 7,426 local jobs, the second highest distribution by neighbourhood across Cork City, accounting for 7.1% of the total jobs in the city. A review of resident workers in the local population confirms that there are only 2,736. What that means is that there is 2.7 jobs for every resident worker in the area. The number of jobs has grown steadily in Mahon over the last decade, but the rate of population growth has been relatively low relative to other parts of Cork. Cork city grew as a whole by 6.2% over the last intercensal period between 2016 and 2022, with the figure for Mahon 4.6% in that time. This underperformance is even more marked in the 2011 to 2016 period when the Cork City growth figure was 5.1%, but was just 1.3% in Mahon.
- There is a clear disconnect between employment provision and population trends in Mahon. A review of commuting patterns underlines the practical planning implications of this. In relation to the 7,426 jobs that exist in Mahon, only 8.8% are occupied by people living in the neighbourhood, meaning 91% of people are commuting into those jobs on a daily basis. This is contributing significantly to traffic congestion in the area, which can only be offset in real terms by growing the resident population who work locally through the provision of new 'urban homes'.
- A review of housing stock in the Mahon neighbourhood confirms there are direct parallels between reduced population growth and housing delivery over the last 15 years. Only 5% of housing stock in the area has been brought forward since 2011, with delivery rates lower than that of wider Cork City. In terms of composition of housing stock, 83% of all homes in Mahon are conventional house/bungalow unit types. The provision of apartments, as proposed, will improve housing choice in the local area.

7.2 Transport Orientated Development (TOD)

Mahon is set to benefit from the delivery of a number of emerging large-scale transport infrastructure projects for the area which will result in significant accessibility enhancements. These include public transport and active travel infrastructure improvements as planned in the Cork BusConnects project and the Cork Luas. In addition to public transport enhancements both will also significantly enhance the existing public and active travel provision. These game changers in terms of Mahon's accessibility are acknowledged in the Two Year Progress Report for the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 in which Mahon is identified as a short-medium term 'TOD Strategic Area'.

BusConnects Cork is a key bus and active travel infrastructure project, which secured Government approval in October 2025, with planning applications expected to be lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála in 2026. Mahon is set to be served by Strategic Transport Corridor (STC) J and its associated improvements (shown as Route 1). Travel time reductions will primarily be achieved through the implementation of new bus lanes, bus gates, and signal-controlled priority for buses between the City Centre and Mahon. Proposed increases to bus frequency will deliver a service every 7.5 – 10 minutes. In addition, Mahon will be served by Bus Routes 3 and 16 providing a service at 15 minute frequency and Route 12 providing a 30 minute frequency service. In addition, a range of junction crossing improvements and bus-stop upgrades along STC J route will enhance pedestrian accessibility to and ease-of-use.

Under the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATs), it is proposed to develop an east to west Light Rail Transit (LRT) rapid transport corridor as an objective for Cork City. The now called 'Cork Luas' proposes that a tram stop will be located adjacent to the subject site at Mahon Point.

Collectively, these investments in rail, bus and active travel infrastructure align with national, regional and local policy objectives to prioritise compact, transport-oriented and sustainable growth. The proposed development of the subject lands will reinforce the role of Mahon as a highly connected and sustainable urban location, supporting a high quality of life for both existing and future residents. The application is supported by a Mobility Management Plan by Egis which confirms the site and attendant area is very well placed to deliver modal shift away from the private car as part of a sustainable transport policy for residents.

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Conclusion

Under ABP-313206-22, An Coimisiún Pleanála have already adjudicated on the proposed development. The single grounds for refusal on that SHD application related to housing mix no longer exists having regard to SPPR 1 of the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025). There are no other impediments to approving the subject scheme. The principle of residential development at this site is acceptable given the current zoning objectives of the site. The design of the proposed development has been informed by an understanding of the site context and the requirement to comply with planning and environmental legislation and has had full regard to evolving planning policy and the assessments of Cork City Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála. The proposed development offers a unique opportunity to transform this under-utilised site and associated lands into a vibrant new neighbourhood, which will contribute to the supply of much needed housing in Mahon, what is probably going to be the most highly sustainable location in Cork City having regard to investment committed. There are no historic landscape impediments to the development proposed. Dereliction of landscape has been occurring across the lands for decades. A programme of landscape mitigation measures to reinvigorate the historic landscape and evolve it into a public amenity, complete with interpretation and commemorative space is proposed. The prepared Masterplan, of which The Farm is a key component part, is sensitive in approach.

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is located as expressed in national, regional and local planning policy and Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development, 2000 (as amended), and as such, it is considered that the proposed development represents a high-quality Large Scale Housing Development proposal which is now being submitted for the consideration of Cork City Council under Section 34(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

09 //

Appendices

Appendix A: Historic Estate Development Extent


N
HWP
c. 205 acres
c. 60 acres
Bessborough Estate Boundary - Post CPO in 1970
Phase 1 - The Farm
Phase 2- The Meadows
Historic Bessborough Demesne
Planning Applications Within Estate Since 2000
0
0.25
0.5 km

Appendix B: Forensic Archaeology Method Statement

Method Statement: Recommended to locate and preserve unrecorded burials, under forensic archaeological control, at the proposed development (Estuary View Enterprises) Bessborough, Cork

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Forensic Archaeologist

3rd March 2022

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1. Non-Technical Summary

1.1 Aidan Harte has been requested by Estuary View Enterprises Ltd. (*i.e.* the Applicant) to prepare a forensic archaeological methodology.

1.2 The Applicant has expressed an awareness of the sensitivity of the area in which the development is proposed and therefore has requested a method statement to outline an appropriate forensic approach to locating any evidence of the existence of 20th century unmarked burials within the potential development area.

1.3 This proposed method statement adheres strictly to the standards and guidelines for Forensic Archaeologists and aims to provide clear information before and during the investigative process and presenting findings in a balanced and impartial manner (CIfA 2014, 2). Itis fully compliant with Principle 1 of the Codes of Conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2019, 3).

1.4 With respect to the findings of the Mother and Baby Home Commission of Investigation (MBHCOI 2020, 34, 4), all parts of the former Bessborough estate, including this proposed development, must be considered to possibly contain unrecorded modern burials.

1.5 The methodology given here may be summarised as comprising four main stages:

1. Research and Survey
2. Forensic Archaeological Monitoring
3. Forensic Search Strategy
4. Oversight, Outcomes & Archiving

1.6 Comprehensive research and survey form an essential prerequisite to this process whereby areas of the proposed development can be considered to have a higher or lower potential for 20th century interments.

1.7 All groundworks undertaken at the proposed development must have a minimum forensic control in place (*i.e*. suitably qualified personnel engaged in a dedicated monitoring role).

1.8 Areas or zones of high potential shall have additional forensic search methods applied, prior to construction.

1.9 Should human remains be discovered, whether considered of archaeological relevance or not, the Coroner must be informed immediately.

1.10 It is recommended that a forensic approach be applied. In its simplest terms, this means that any evidence relating to burials or human remains must be identified and recorded in such a way as to maintain forensic control and thus the admissibility of that evidence in any future legal proceedings.

2. Introduction

2.1 This methodology is designed to locate any possible burials within the bounds of the proposed development, while maintaining forensic control. In essence, this means that best practice can be applied to ensure that every effort is made to identify potential burials prior to development, and should such human remains be discovered, that they are adequately protected, and a robust forensic record is available to demonstrate this.

2.2 In the absence of a predefined oversight structure (*i.e.* Coroner/An Garda Síochána/Commission *etc*.) it is necessary that the Local Authority be regularly updated as to the progress of the forensic monitoring and search. Additionally, the role of survivors, family members and other stakeholders in the overall process must also be acknowledged. Previous investigations of such sensitive sites of unmarked children's burials have shown that transparency and effective communication with survivors, and other concerned parties, is an essential feature, for trust and respect and ultimately the completion of the project (McCullagh et al. 2017; Gallen 2017; Hopwood 2011). It is recommended that a dedicated survivor liaison be appointed to act as a point of contact for such stakeholders and help address any concerns arising at any stage of the forensic search.

2.3 The first step in this methodology is that of research and geophysical survey (Stage 1). This is fundamentally a desktop review, allied with different types of ground survey, used to evaluate the development site. All parts of the development require forensic archaeological monitoring (Stage 2). However, parts of the development that have a higher likelihood of burials must be subject to targeted forensic search (Stage 3). The details of these subsequent phases (2 and 3) cannot yet be determined until all pre-works surveying and assessment have been carried out. Only then can prioritised search zones be identified.

2.4 It is recommended that the demolition of existing structures be carried out with attention to the ground surface below. Every effort should be made to limit the disturbance and compaction at ground level by heavy machinery and rubble prior to forensic examination.

2.5 As a rule, the most basic way to protect any burials is by avoiding ground disturbance in the first instance. It may be possible to restrict work activities to those parts of the site deemed essential to the development of the project – for example, green spaces not essential to the operation of the construction phase should not be used for temporary storage of materials, or access *etc*. and instead be considered as exclusion zones.

2.6 The role of the Cork City Coroner is of primary importance in the event of burials being located.

2.7 The forthcoming Certain Institutional Burials Bill is also noteworthy. Where evidence is discovered, it must be admissible under this legislation and to a standard that is aligned with this Bill.

2.8 The transparent reporting of all findings of this forensic search is essential. Furthermore, reports must be adequately archived with relevant authorities for permanent record at the completion of works.

3. Request

3.1 Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Ltd., through its Architects, requested that the author prepare this method statement for Forensic Search/Oversight at the proposed developments, 'The Meadows' and 'The Farm', Bessborough, Cork on 28th June 2021. Advice on forensic archaeological methodologies that might be applied during the phased development, with a focus on the potential for unrecorded burials, was specified.

3.2 The details of the development, for which the methodology is designed, is based on proposed development layout drawings supplied by ShipseyBarry Architects on the 17th February 2022. A composite of these drawings is shown in Figure 1.

3.3 The overall development area extends to over 6Ha., while the footprint of proposed buildings is more limited. It is assumed that ground clearance will be required at and around each proposed building and at all routes for roads and services, as a minimum.

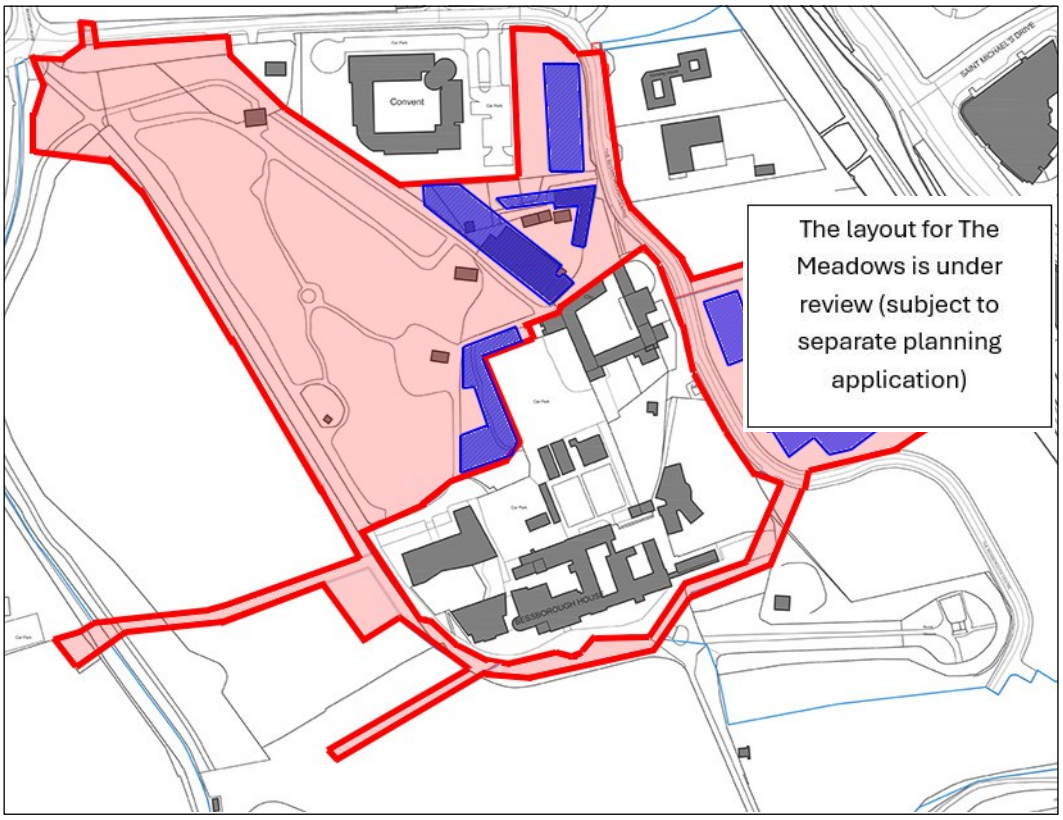


Figure 1: Outline of development area (in red) with proposed structures shown in blue (map data from ShipseyBarry Architects)

4. Previous Investigations/Background

4.1 The Convent of the Sacred Heart Mother and Baby Home at Bessborough was in operation from 1922 to 1998. During this time, 923 children who were associated with Bessborough died (MBHCOI 2020, Exec. Sum, 27), most of whom (761) died at Bessborough (*ibid*, Chapter 18A, 38).

4.2 Cursory examination of the available aerial imagery shows substantial ground disturbance in the eastern portion of this site – here referred to as 'the Meadows' – prior to June 2006 (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Aerial image of Bessborough in June 2006 showing disturbed ground at east (source: Google Earth Pro)

4.3 The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation (MBHCOI) stated that it 'i*s possible that children who died in Bessborough were buried within the grounds*' (MBHCOI 2019, 31) and that '*The Commission… recognises that it is highly likely that burials did take place in the grounds of Bessborough. The only way that this can be established is by an excavation of the entire property including those areas that are now built on.*' (MBHCOI 2020, 34, 4). It is worth reiterating that the Commission found there to be *'no significant surface evidence of systematic burial anywhere except for the congregation burial ground'* (MBHCOI 2019, 31). This surface survey was complimented by extensive documentary research, following which the Commission noted '*The third edition Ordnance Survey Map for the Bessborough area… identifies a southeast portion of the site as a "Children's Burial Ground*"'(*ibid*.).

4.4 Archaeological Test Trenching was conducted in January 2019, at the location of 'The Meadows' at the eastern side of this proposed development. This was carried out under licence (19E0003) from the National Monuments Service (Chambers 2019). This comprised six test trenches and employed the use of a metal detector (under licence 19R0001), sieving of

soil and the presence of an osteoarchaeologist. The findings of this assessment clearly indicated extensive ground disturbance across a substantial part of this portion of the site. It also found that agricultural features, such as ditches and plough furrows, could be discerned. It was concluded by the archaeologist that no evidence of burials could be identified at this location.

4.5 Pre-planning Site Investigation works undertaken in January 2022 and, while limited in scale, were monitored with a forensic control in place. The extent of disturbance was minimised, and the controlled excavations at six locations indicated no evidence of burials. These locations are the same as those at which the geotechnical information was examined and account for less than 0.07% of the total development area. However, the effectiveness of the method and techniques applied were demonstrated by the recovery of two small lithic artefacts of prehistoric date and these have now been reported to the National Museum of Ireland.

5. Stage 1: Initial Research & Survey

5.1 A desktop review must be completely in advance of other stages. While comprehensive documentary research has already been conducted by various parties, there is an obligation on the Forensic Archaeologist to have independently researched all available relevant background information on the area under investigation prior to conducting a search (CIfA 2014, 5.1(a)). This includes all documentary and cartographic material, and review of any relevant witness statements.

5.2 A detailed and accurate topographical survey must be made prior to development to permit the efficient recording of all anomalies identified in any subsequent phases of work. The position of features or specific areas of interest, derived from geophysical survey or cartographic analysis, must also be accurately positioned by GPS/GNSS survey, and marked on the ground. This action also includes the evaluation by suitably qualified practitioners prior to groundworks the surface of the proposed development, including access/egress routes, compounds and services, and all ancillary construction work (*i.e*. soakaways, drainage, temporary storage *etc*.).

5.3 Geophysical Survey – and other remote sensing techniques - should be considered for areas identified through desktop review as having potential for burials. This must happen prior to any further ground disturbance. Different techniques may be suitable at parts of the site with different ground conditions. Such techniques, such as Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), LiDAR *etc*. may also be applied to specific liminal areas that may not have been impacted by previous ground works, such as adjacent to boundaries. All surveys must be conducted at an appropriately high resolution to produce meaningful results.

6. Stage 2: Forensic Archaeological Monitoring

6.1 All areas of the proposed development, where ground disturbance is unavoidable, must be subjected to forensic archaeological monitoring. Should a given part of the proposed development site be considered as having a higher potential for burials through initial surveys, then these must be subjected to a specific forensic search (See Section 7.

6.2 Forensic Archaeological Monitoring can be practically applied to large areas of relevant interest. The removal of topsoil and substrata by mechanical excavator across these areas should be monitored at all times by at least one Forensic Archaeologist and/or one Osteo-archaeologist/Forensic Anthropologist with previous experience of forensic controls.

6.3 This monitoring of soils must be systematically applied. The progression of the soil removal must be planned in advance to ensure complete coverage and should be regularly and accurately mapped.

6.4 Items of evidential value must be recorded *in situ* where possible, and a complete record made prior to being logged and removed. Such evidence should include modern debris that demonstrates previous land use, taphonomy, bioturbation and other site formation processes, in addition to artefactual indicators for burial (e.g., coffin nails, pins, timber fragments *etc*.). All works must stop should human remains be discovered, full forensic controls applied and the Coroner informed immediately.

6.5 This method of systematic forensic monitoring may be compared to that successfully implemented by the Commission for the Location of Victims Remains (ICLVR). While these searches were targeted at finding adult remains, the method used by ICLVR searches uses a systematic monitoring plan to ensure that all parts of a site are searched thoroughly (Knupfer, Godfrey & Hill 2017). The successful evaluation and preservation of human remains *in situ* has also been successfully implemented elsewhere (MBHCOI 2019, chapter 38b).

7. Stage 3: Forensic Search Strategy

7.1 Specified areas where there is a high potential for unrecorded burials shall be selected based on the results of desktop review and GPR or other remotely sensed data (outlined at Stage 4 in Section 5). These areas shall be the subject of Forensic Search, prior to any other development activity.

7.2 All forensic searches should be controlled by a qualified and experienced Forensic Archaeologist.

7.3 The areas identified for high potential of burials should be divided into operational zones and investigated using a priority-based approach. This strengthens the ability to preserve any such remains *in situ*.

7.4 Soil shall be removed systematically using an appropriate mechanical excavator while monitored by at least one Forensic Archaeologist and one Osteo-archaeologist/Forensic Anthropologist. This combination of specialisms is an appropriate method of evaluating disturbed (and possibly very small fragments) skeletal remains. Where items of evidential value are noted, a completed record must be made prior to it being logged and removed. In the case of human remains, no such action would take place, instead the 'scene' must be secured, and the appropriate authorities informed.

7.5 The soil removed by excavation (termed 'spoil') should be placed on a designated surface and spread out for further examination. Using detection devices, this spoil must again be searched, and a representative sample sieved for bone fragments and other evidence indicative of burial activity. This stage acts to verify the absence of evidence, as controlled sieving measures have shown to improve the recovery of human bone by as much as 53% (Mays, Vincent & Campbell 2012). Where fragmented or small material is recovered by these techniques the excavation must cease, and only once a limited area can be confidently deemed void of human remains, should the forensic excavation continue.

7.6 Personnel conducting this on-site work will at all times conduct themselves with an awareness of contamination issues (*e.g.* agreed routes of access and protective clothing) (CIfA 2014, 5.1(e)). All tools and equipment will have been decontaminated prior to arrival on site, and subsequently at regularly intervals to avoid cross-contamination throughout a given search programme. Any evidential items must be recorded and collected in adherence with forensic protocol.

7.7 Contemporaneous logs of personnel, decisions and actions, and evidence collected must be maintained. Similarly, the record of stratigraphy and features of interest are made on a contemporaneous and continuous basis.

7.8 Should human remains be identified *in situ*, the search must stop and the Coroner must be notified. A protective buffer should be implemented surrounding the potential burial. This is done to preserve the identified remains and any other possible remains in the immediate area. Machinery or vehicles must not traverse the area, until such time as the extent can be evaluated. Forensic search personnel may be deployed elsewhere on the site, albeit within a different zone.

7.9 Should fragmentary or disarticulated human remains be identified *ex situ*, then that area of excavation will cease, the area secured, and the Coroner informed immediately.

7.10 Where site facilities are required (*e.g.* welfare units, running water *etc*.), secure fencing should be necessary to prevent access by unauthorised personnel. Under warrant these sites would necessarily have 24-hour security provided. While a warrant is not is place, security is still of concern should the site be left open to contamination and interference. Additionally, the security of potential evidence and the longer-term secure storage of this material must also be considered.

8. Stage 4: Oversight & Outcomes

8.1 It is not within the remit of this methodology to countenance the removal/excavation/exhumation of any human remains discovered as a result of development. Preservation *in situ* must always be the primary consideration, however, this decision, should it arise, lies with the Cork City Coroner.

8.2 There is currently no established reporting mechanism for forensic search enacted outside of the state authorises (*i.e.* An Garda Síochána/Commissions of Investigation *etc*.), particularly where a negative result – the absence of burial – is the outcome. Therefore, the methodology employed and the reporting of such must be to the highest standard, regarded as independent and beyond reproach.

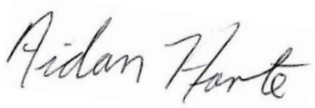
8.3 In acknowledgement of survivors, it is recommended that a dedicated liaison be appointed to help address any concerns they may have about the forensic search and subsequent reporting (Knupfer, Godfrey & Hill 2017).

8.4 It is necessary that on completion of each phase of forensic monitoring or specific forensic search, particularly where a negative result has been established, the lead Forensic Archaeologist communicates this finding in writing to specified authorities.

8.5 A full report and archive of all searches carried out and the results of same should be lodged with the Local Authority for future consultation.

9. Declaration

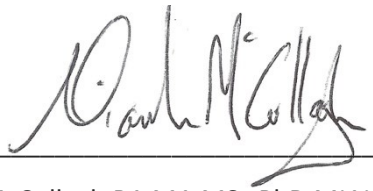
The information provided in this document is provided as both truthful and correct and is the express opinion of the undersigned.



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Forensic Archaeologist 3rd March 2022

Peer Reviewed



Dr N. McCullagh BA MA MSc PhD MIAI ACSFS

Forensic Archaeologist 3rd March 2022

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