



JUSTICE FOR MAGDALENES RESEARCH

Justice for Magdalenes Research
Crocknahattina
Baillieborough
Co Cavan

16th January 2020

Natalie De Roiste
Case Officer
Planning and Property Development Department
Dublin City Council
Block 4, Floor 3
Civic Offices
Wood Quay
Dublin 8

Via email to: planning@dublincity.ie

**Re: Planning Reference 4198/19
Proposed Development at the Bonnington Hotel, Swords Road,
Whitehall, Dublin 9**

Dear Ms De Roiste,

I refer to the above application for planning permission, submitted to Dublin City Council (DCC) by Liffeyfield Limited on 14th October 2019. I am cognisant of the fact that the time has now expired for observations on the application, however, as I do not live in the area, I was not made aware of it until today. I hope that nonetheless you will take the information below into account. If necessary, I am happy to pay the observation fee as generally required.

Justice for Magdalenes Research (JFMR) is a non-profit, voluntary organisation. Our main aim is to educate the general public by researching the Magdalene Laundries and similar institutions and by providing information and support to the women who

spent time in the Magdalene Laundries and their families. It is in this context that I wish to discuss the proposed development at the Bonnington Hotel.

As you may be aware, the area to the rear of the Bonnington (currently the hotel car park) was previously the location of St Mary's graveyard at the former Magdalene Laundry at High Park. In August 1993, the 155 women buried at that location were exhumed from the site and reinterred at Glasnevin Cemetery. Although a memorial bench was subsequently unveiled in St Stephen's Green to commemorate all the women incarcerated in the Magdalene Laundries, many questions remain about the circumstances surrounding the exhumations at High Park. For further information on this issue please visit the following link: http://jfmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/JFMR_Critique_190215.pdf

In 1993 the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge sold the lands in question to Regan Developments. In 1994 Regan Developments obtained planning permission to develop the site (**Planning Reference 0686/94**). DCC granted permission, however, the Council placed the following condition on the development:

Formal recognition of the significance of this site in the social history of the community is required in its redevelopment. This shall take the form of a memorial on the site to both the women who lived there and the Sisters of Charity who provided St. Mary's Home and the Magdalene laundry. The relief panel over the former entrance to St. Mary's depicting Mary Magdalene shall be incorporated into the memorial; which shall be located in the open space surrounding the buildings. Details of the memorial, its setting and precise location shall be the subject of a compliance submission which shall include detailed drawings. This submission shall receive the written agreement of the Planning Authority before development commences. REASON: In order to provide formal recognition of the historic use of this site.

To my knowledge, this condition has never been complied with, however, if DCC has information to the contrary, I would be grateful if you could let me know. It is imperative that the Bonnington Hotel now acknowledges the women who were incarcerated at High Park. Further, it is hugely important that the location of the former graveyard from which the 155 women were exhumed is also acknowledged. There are two trees at the car park near the location of the graveyard, and this would be an ideal place to erect a memorial to these women.

I respectfully suggest that the new development is planned at the Bonnington Hotel provides an opportunity to ensure that the women who lived and died at High Park are acknowledged, as per the 1994 condition.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider this matter and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. McGettrick', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Claire McGettrick
On behalf of Justice for Magdalenes Research