

## **JFM Research Statement Re An Coimisiún Pleanála Decision to Grant Permission for Sundays Well Development—11<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

Justice for Magdalenes Research (JFMR) notes An Coimisiún Pleanála's (ACP) [decision](#) to grant planning permission for a development on the site of the former Magdalene Laundry and Industrial School run by the Good Shepherd Sisters at Sundays Well in Cork City.<sup>1</sup> **JFMR is deeply concerned that ACP has declined to address JFMR's recommendations, as set out in our [submission](#) to ACP.** JFMR's submission highlights several issues, including:

- (i) **the lack of consultation with affected people**, noting the inadequacy of Cork City Council's (CCC) corresponding condition;
- (ii) **the urgent need to repair, maintain and provide access to the Magdalene graveyard adjacent to the development**, noting that the development as proposed would leave the burial ground in its current state of inaccessibility and neglect, thereby perpetuating the marginalisation of the women and girls interred there;
- (iii) **concerns regarding inaccuracies on the headstones at the site**, and the implications of this for family members of women buried at Sundays Well;
- (iv) **the question of potential undocumented burials at the site**, and the positive obligation to conduct research to ascertain how many women and children died at Sundays Well and where they are buried, noting that unless these facts are established conclusively prior to the commencement of construction, State authorities run the risk of allowing uncertainty to prevail;
- (v) **the need to locate, preserve and safeguard historical records and artefacts**, noting that the CCC *Archaeology Report* fails to acknowledge the possibility that twentieth-century artefacts and other items of substantial social and historical value may be present at Sundays Well;
- (vi) **the importance of ensuring active memorialisation and acknowledgement of those who suffered human rights abuses at Sundays Well**, noting that the memorial plan in the development as proposed is unethical and insensitive since it links the commemorative space with the burial site of members of the religious order responsible for abuses.

**None of the concerns outlined above have been addressed by ACP.** In its decision, ACP merely reiterates CCC's condition that, should human remains be discovered during construction, all work must cease immediately, and the relevant authorities be notified. The decision makes no further reference to the issue of burials at the site. Moreover, ACP decision simply echoes CCC's vague provision concerning 'consultation with third-party interests' regarding memorialisation, without providing further clarity or guidance, and fails to incorporate our recommendation to involve the Special Advocate for Survivors as a key conduit for consultation.

By failing to address these issues, ACP has missed a critical opportunity to ensure that the development at Sundays Well incorporates accurate, appropriate and inclusive memorialisation and that it does not further marginalise those who lived and died within the institutions on the campus. **Consequently, we urge the developer, Bellmount Good Shepherd Ltd., to take JFMR's concerns into account as construction progresses, and to engage with the Special Advocate for Survivors to ensure meaningful consultation with affected people.**

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<sup>1</sup> ACP's decision is not yet publicly available on its website. To ensure access for survivors and affected people, JFMR has made the documents available here: <https://ifmresearch.com/publications/ifmr-planning-submissions/>