

To: An Bord Pleanála

From: E. O'Brien, 52 Woodlawn Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14 D14 PA07

Date: May 8th 2022

Re: Case reference Number: 313220

Location: Old Dundrum Shopping Centre, Main Street, Dundrum

Description : Hammerson-Allianz SHD Plans for Dundrum Village

There are numerous grounds for rejecting this proposed development and some of these are itemised below, but before turning to specific objections it is important for the Board to have a clear picture of the significance of this site with our community.

This is not an abstract brownfield site – it part of community ecosystem. It is encircled by our library, a number of primary schools, Joe Daly's well-known bicycle shop and three churches of Taney Christ Church, Holy Cross and St Nahis. All of Dundrum life can be seen here: children and parents walking or cycling to school, people frequenting the banks and shops on Main Street. The residents of Dundrum are rightly proud of their history - the Yeates sisters buried in St Nathi's churchyard, the Overends who bequeathed their urban farm at Airfield to the community for use as a public amenity – but it also a community not stuck in the past. It has welcomed developments, including the building of Dublin Town Centre, additional housing in the greater Dundrum area, and the recent traffic redesign in the village to further promote sustainable transport, walking and cycling. The proposed development, however, is so utterly out of kilter with planning norms for this site it should be rejected in no uncertain terms. Would the Board contemplate putting a 16-storey tower off College Green in Dublin, or next to Shop Street in Galway and, if not in those cities, where is the justification for putting one right at the epicentre of Dundrum? How can it make sense - under any planning code - to put an enormous set of tower blocks, right at the crossroads of our community?

More specific objections to the proposal include :

- **The scale of the development** with 11 apartment blocks made up of 5, 8 12 and one at 16 storeys high, which would substantially overshadow the area, is totally at odds with the pre-existing low-rise dwellings near it, and represents significant overdevelopment of this space. The buildings, particularly the larger 8, 12 and 16 storeys would loom large from many vantage points in and around Dundrum;
- **The purpose of the scheme is primarily residential**, (95%), comprising of one, two and three bedroom apartments. What is needed is a lower density scheme with a blend of accommodation that will also cater for the needs of young families and older persons;
- **The poor vision in relation to a mix of uses for the site.** The proposal does not adequately plan for important community and cultural spaces, critical for a rapidly growing area – for example a civic square for outdoor gatherings and festivals and most critically, quality play/ outdoor spaces;
- **The proposal to demolish a number of historic buildings on Dundrum’s Main Street.** These buildings have now been designated as an Architectural Conservation Area in the new Country Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and it is imperative that they be retained as part of the historic fabric of the village. Any attempt to demolish them on the grounds that they are in a poor state of repair and/or not functionally compatible with modern commercial use should be rejected. The tearing down of some of the historic housing in Dundrum would miss a key opportunity to sensitively and sustainably revitalise Dundrum’s Main Street. This proposal would seem to be totally at odds with The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape Report of the Second Consultation on its Implementation by Member States, 2019, where members recognised the importance of safeguarding the intangible values of urban heritage;

- **The strain on already overstretched transport links** from Dundrum to the City Centre, to which such a dense residential development would add. The Luas tram line is already at maximum capacity at peak times for local residents attempting to board the tram at Dundrum Station, while the main Dundrum Road, particularly out of the City Centre at peak times, experiences tailbacks. Much of the Dundrum Road has not been widened since I first began travelling it in the 1970s; it remains very narrow in places with no scope for inserting cycle lanes. And this already against the backdrop of significant residential developments already approved for the site at the Central Mental Hospital and Mount St Marys at the junction of Bird Avenue and Dundrum Road.

While welcoming the renewed interest in the site of the old Dundrum Shopping Centre, I am extremely disappointed and concerned with the Hammerson-Allianz plans for the site. If the proposal is approved it will change in a profoundly negative way Dundrum village and its environs. It will result in a situation whereby the Main Street will become book-ended by two huge developments - the new apartment block site with its overwhelming height, scale and bulk at one end and Dundrum Town Centre at the other - and a key opportunity to retain the charm of the village while appropriately revitalising the old Shopping Centre site will be missed.