

To: An Bord Pleanála

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022

From: Paul & Kathy Walsh, 13 Birchfield Park, Goatstown, Dublin 14

Re: Hammerson/Allianz Application to An Bord Pleanála for Strategic Housing Development at Dundrum Village

Planning Reference: ABP 313220

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To Whom it May Concern,

We wish to make an objection to the proposed SHD Development at Dundrum Village.

We have been living in the Dundrum/ Goatstown for over 25 years and are objecting to the proposed development for the following reasons:

### **(1) Excessive Height**

The height of the proposed development is completely out of keeping with the existing streetscape of Dundrum Village and will destroy the historic character and feel of the village.

5 Storey height at street level through the village is too high but the design of same right out to street level and the inconsistent angles are unattractive and will completely destroy the existing streetscape with little or no regard to landscaping or stepping back from the street to soften the impact.

The proposed development is also situated on quite a narrow site with other blocks behind the main street frontage rising rapidly to 10/12 storeys and a "landmark" building of 16 storeys. These, although not directly on the main street, will still grossly overshadow it due to their close proximity and will tower over and dwarf the 5 storey blocks.

They also overshadow our neighbours and friends living in the Sweetmount area whose homes would be impacted enormously and directly by these 10 to 16 storey monstrosities depriving them of the right to the enjoyment and privacy of their homes.

### **(2) Density**

As mentioned this is a relatively small and narrow site running the length of Dundrum Village. The plans show 11 apartment blocks ranging in size from 5 to 12 storey and one huge 16 storey block in a Village!!!! The development will consist of 881 apartments. This is an extremely high concentration of apartments in what is a village setting and is totally unsuited to this type of development which would permanently ruin the character and fabric of the village.

### **(3) Use**

Apart from the Density and Height of the proposed development already mentioned above, we are alarmed at the proposed use. The development will be 95% residential which is totally unacceptable in a town / village setting and basically would turn the area into a vertical housing estate with little or no amenities. This is totally against the ideals of a modern residential development which should provide proper amenities and facilities for residents. In fact, it is laughable that the extremely small recreational area is pigeonholed at the far end of the site behind the existing Church rather than in a more accessible location in the middle of the development where the residents might be able to enjoy it and where it could the monotony of this overbearing development. The area is already

struggling with demand for schools, GPs etc and this will put further pressure on the existing educational and health facilities not to mention transport which is already at breaking point for cars, buses and LUAS particularly at peak hours.

The Applicants state that “the vision is to deliver a contemporary and vibrant place to live, underpinned by the re-establishment of the traditional shopping thoroughfare along Dundrum Main Street”. Yet this development is 95% residential – this is not a vibrant place to live – it is high density, high rise living with no amenities and no sense of place or community. A soulless place to live where people will have no connection with and will no doubt deteriorate over time.

#### **(4) Design**

The design of the development is extremely poor and obviously designed by organisations only interested in maximum saturation and density and therefore profit with little concern for aesthetics. The height and style of the buildings are angular, out of keeping with their surroundings, with a monolithic tower to one end not dissimilar to the towers in Ballymun which they had the good sense to knock down and re-develop with far more sympathetic and suitable housing.

Yet here we are in 2022 and are looking at making similar mistakes again if this development goes ahead. The larger blocks to the rear are mundane, repetitive and poor design visually. The front blocks on Dundrum Main Street are jagged and angular and really will spoil the village visually and are totally unsuited to this location.

#### **(5) Materially Contravenes the New County Plan for Dundrum**

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council have formally adopted its new county plan for the next 6 years which includes recommendations for the re-development of Dundrum Village. The plan aimed to ensure the right kind of development for Dundrum Village with objectives for civic, cultural and community space along with a healthy mix of retail, business and residential – ie appropriate usage for a town or village setting. It also recommended that existing buildings which have been given recognised historical status be preserved and re-developed in tandem with any future developments. This would ensure a sympathetic and suitable development for an existing town centre. It would provide much needed housing in a suitable environment with proper amenities for everyone – new residents of the village and existing residents of surrounding areas alike.

This application has been rushed in at the last minute before the SHD process comes to an end in total contravention of County Plan and with very little time for examination / analysis. This is despite the fact that Hammerson Allianz (the applicants) have owned the site for years and refused to engage with local organisations and indeed the Council. Historic buildings will be demolished and our history lost. It is quite clear that they have no interest in Dundrum and only their own interests ie. building the largest and most profitable development they can get away with under existing legislation. This SHD process shamefully allows applications of this nature where deadlines for a decision do not allow enough time to examine the plans and a situation where the Applicants do not have to engage with the County Planners on a meaningful level.

## **(6) Conclusion**

Thank-you for taking the time to read and consider our observations and concerns regarding this proposed development. To re-cap on just some of the issues, we strongly feel the development is **in total contravention of the statutory Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council development plan for the county and should be declined on this basis.**

Dundrum is not a green or brownfield site suitable for a tall, high density development. It is a village that has been here for hundreds of years and has grown and developed over this time along with the surrounding areas. It is the heart of our neighbourhood, it belongs to the people of the area and the people of Ireland and I include all nationalities living here not just Irish. We want to see our neighbourhood and village improved. Yes, we want to see it developed and additional housing provided which we accept is crucial but in a sustainable way.

Is this proposed development going to provide the housing needed? We have no guarantees that all the apartments will be offered for sale on the open market, also the price ranges will most likely exclude most first time buyers. It is highly likely that institutional investors will buy up the properties to avail of the very high and profitable rents in the area. This has happened with the neighbouring development at the Notre Dame site which also has a high unoccupancy rate due to the exorbitant rents. Better to get high rents on 60% of the developments rather than more affordable ones on 95-100% with a smaller profit margin – this is really not helping to solve any housing crisis!! And there are numerous other developments where similar situations are occurring.

Crucially, this is going to change an established village irreversibly for generations to come if approved and not in a good way!! A development of this size and scale requires considerable consultation and co-operation with the Council and Planners. It really should not be decided within a 6-8 week period with the applicants refusing to consult with stakeholders.

There is something intrinsically wrong with the current situation where overseas Property Developers and multi-national Insurance/Investment firms can buy up tracts of our towns and villages and maximise their own interests and profits by building unattractive, high-rise mundane looking and over-bearing developments which will ruin our towns and sail off into the sunset without any regard to the permanent impact and ruination of our neighbourhood. They have clearly shown their lack of concern through their unwillingness to liaise with the Public and Council and I really hope that common sense will prevail here and An Bord Pleanála will refuse this totally unsuitable application.

Kind Regards,

Paul and Kathy Walsh