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Observer Address: 23 Old Rectory Park, Dundrum, Dublin 14. D14 V960

Development Reference Number: 313220

<https://dundrumvillageshd.ie/>

I have lived in Dundrum since 2014. I have no particular planning expertise, but hoped that any development on this central site would contribute to the creation of a thriving and diverse community in Dundrum. I fear that the construction of a 95% residential and largely private “compound” over 8 years will displace what little local business and foot traffic is left and forever close off the opportunity to develop a civic space where residents, existing and new, young and old, can meet and engage.

In summary my grounds for objection are :

- 1. The proposed development is 95% residential which appears to be a material contravention of the zoning of this area as Major Town Centre (“MTC”).**
- 2. There is no substantial provision for a much needed civic centre in these development proposals.**
- 3. The duration of the proposed works is 8 years during which time the whole site will be inaccessible to this community which will remove footfall and permanently damage local indigenous commercial in**
- 4. terests.**
- 5. The height, scale and density of the proposed developments will damage, beyond redemption, the character of Dundrum, both main street (much of which is designated an “architectural conservation area” in Appendix 4 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 ) and the village as a whole.**
- 6. Questionable suitability of site for such a densely residential development.**

I elaborate on these below.

<https://dundrumvillageshd.ie/>

- 1. The proposed development is 95% residential which appears to be a material contravention of the zoning of this area as Major Town Centre (“MTC”).**

I understand the objective of the MTC zoning is “to protect, provide for and/or improve major town centre facilities” . Not only does this development fail to meet these criteria but it also will permanently remove the opportunity to ever have them met. While I note that residential development is permitted in principle in an MTC zone, I would contend that Dundrum has underdone much (and is undergoing much more) residential development and needs rebalancing to cater to local commercial and civic interests.

The so called “Dundrum Town Centre” retail space caters to a very narrow retail interest – primarily fashion – and cannot be said to meet the commercial and retail needs of a diverse community.

Hammerson-Allianz have left potential residential spaces and commercial spaces near derelict and under utilised for twenty years, damaging the commercial heart and with it, the local community.

Despite this, and perhaps due to more affordable rents, Main street and carpark/Old Shopping centre, retains some smaller locally owned businesses – the post office, a zero waste independent enterprise, a vets practice, a music school.

Anyone who walks the 15 minute radius around the Luas Bridge in Dundrum can witness the significant **residential** construction (existing, ongoing and planned) in the past 20 years. The residents of these homes need diverse, walkable retail and civic space that befits a town centre.

Thus, it seems to me that if this zoning is intended to create balance, the development of this site represents the only opportunity to rebalance Dundrum. A vast residential block of the density envisaged will permanently remove that opportunity.

## **2. There is no substantial provision for a much needed civic centre in these development proposals.**

The current level of residential development in Dundrum is not matched by a civic heart.

Residents have little chance to interact in the way that I have seen in other locations (e.g. DLR Lexicon, Ilac Centre Library). The Carneige library, while a beautiful and historic building and a welcoming space is very small in relation to the current and growing population.

The only public spaces where people can gather for a talk or a public meeting that I am aware of are both parish centres affiliated to Churches. (Public meetings regarding this development were held in Church owned properties NOT the local, non-denominational space. )

The very limited civic space that is envisaged in this plan is to be hidden away backing onto the Dundrum Bypass and accessible by steps. The Civic space should enhance the Main Street and be accessible and inviting to passers by. However, just the like the Mill theatre, which opens discreetly onto a taxi rank below the more attractive podium of fountains and eating places, the civic space is to be tucked out of in a space that will add nothing to the Main Street.

One of the great advantages of living in an urban area is the independent interactions with other people. If Dundrum is to increase it's residential population in line with the volume of current construction this will bring huge diversity. People need spaces to have a conversations without paying the earth for a coffee or being moved on. Children and teenagers growing up in all these apartments will need space to learn and practice music, to study, to meet their friends and nurture their interests beyond the shopping mall.

**3. The duration of the proposed works is 8 years during which time the whole site will be inaccessible to this community and the commercial attractiveness of Main Street further undermined.**

Construction will bring dust, dirt, traffic disruption and noise to the already cramped main street. This would also appear to be an implicit violation of the MTC zoning 'To protect, provide for and/or improve major town centre facilities', and likely to do significant damage to the remaining local businesses on main street.

The proposed scale and long duration also increases the vulnerability of the project to market forces and increases the risk of non completion such as occurred in Sandyford.

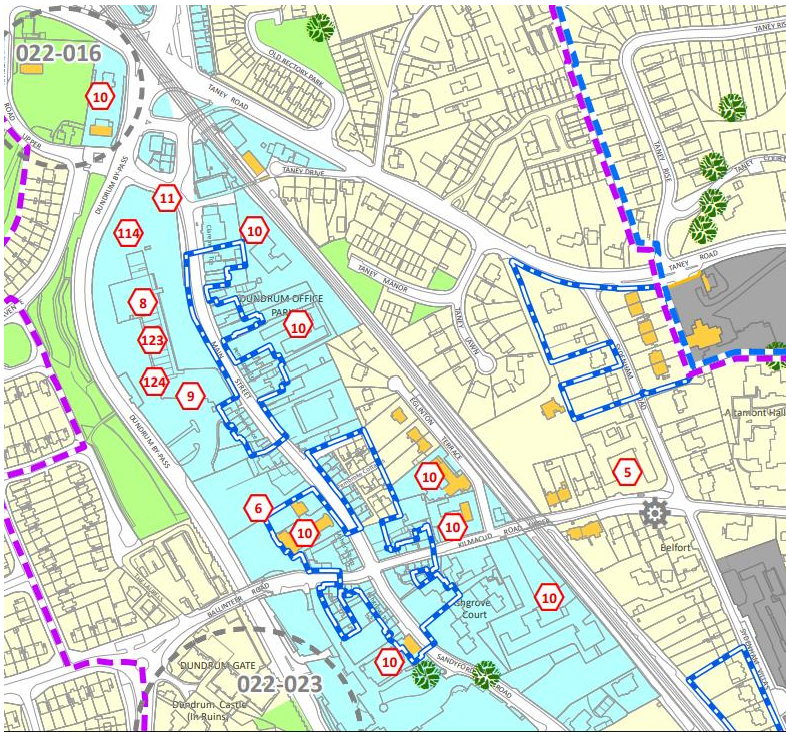
182 Sentinel Tower in Sandyford - Is it still derelict?



**4. The height, scale and density of the proposed developments will damage, beyond redemption, the character of Dundrum, both main street (much of which is designated an “architectural conservation area” in Appendix 4 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 ) and the village as a whole.**

- 5 storeys built onto main street will darken and cramp that narrow space.
- the “landmark” 16 storeys onto the Dundrum bypass will dwarf, and from many angles, obscure the existing landmark, the elegant and striking William Dargle Luas Bridge.
- The density, height and scale of the proposed development is such that it will alter the landscape of the village (a valley) and obscure the remaining views of the mountains from the bridge.

Dundrum (incorporating Pembroke Cottages, Ballinteer Road and Main Street).



Section 8.1. of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended states, (1) A Development Plan shall include an objective to preserve character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that – (a) is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest or value, or, (b) contributed to the appreciation of Protected Structures, if the Planning Authority is of the opinion that its inclusion is necessary for the preservation of the character of the place, area, group of structures or townscape shall be known as and is in the Act referred to as an “Architectural Conservation Areas”.

### 7. Questionable suitability of site for such a densely residential development.

While the brochures advertise with pictures of young families happily playing in the open “grass” between the buildings, the more likely reality is that

- Any space between buildings will be dark and cold for much of the year
- Hard landscaping will be necessary (as grass won’t grow or will require too much maintenance) and therefore the spaces may not be suitable for childrens play
- The overflow will be onto Sweetmount park (which is a narrow area, sloping steeply down to a river and also therefore may not be suitable for young children)
- The areas will be “privately held” and are likely to be unwelcoming if not inaccessible to the local community.

Those are projections rather than facts but but I’ve drawn upon the actual observation of Fernbank, 200 metres up the hill, as evidence of how these type of developments enclose spaces and block off communities into self contained compounds (<https://fernbank.ie/location/>)

.. The privatization of such a central space will forever damage the landscape, community and sustainability of the area.