

Status of the documents: the most important thing to know about these three documents is that they do not represent decisions on final plans submitted by Hammerson-Allianz in an application for planning permission.

The Opinion issued by An Bord Pleanála (ABP) on 14/01/22 is not a final decision, but a set of comments and recommendations on proposals discussed with the developer over the previous few months. It also takes into account the Report from the Chief Executive of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council on the Dundrum development proposals.

Together, these documents mark the end of the first stage of a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) planning process, after which a developer has 16 weeks to consider An Bord Pleanála's views and lodge final plans. Once lodged with ABP, they will be published by the developer and ABP, for public viewing. The public has 5 weeks to review the plans and to make "observations" on these final plans to ABP, after which it has 11 weeks to reach its decision whether to approve or not.

At the time of writing, 6 weeks have elapsed since the publication (14th January) of the Opinion, so it's possible that a final set of plans could be presented to ABP for permission very soon!

Availability: these three ABP documents are publicly available and can be disseminated, but the complete file, including the CEO Report of DLR County Council, some drawings and site plans, can be viewed in person at the ABP public offices in Marlborough Street, under certain conditions. **The reference number for the Hammerson-Allianz Dundrum file is 311553-21.**

Listed below are the most important facts and figures presented in these documents, and An Bord Pleanála's views and comments on these and other aspects of the proposed development.

What do the documents tell us about the Proposals? - the main facts and figures:

- According to the An Bord Pleanála documents, Hammerson-Allianz propose to build a total of 884 apartments, plus a large foodstore, some other retail units and a creche, on a site of just under 3.5 hectares (8.5 acres) covering Dundrum's Old Shopping Centre (OSC) site and the whole area stretching across from the West side of Main Street to the Dundrum bypass, and from the Northern end of the OSC carpark to the Ballinteer Road bridge behind Holy Cross church. This is a Strategic Housing Development(SHD) application.
- This proposed development will be 95% residential, with only 5% is for other uses, basically retail, including a large foodstore.
- Eleven buildings are proposed around the central development spine and a series of 4 courtyards apartment blocks
- The apartments proposed are of three types: 1-bedroom (40% of total), 2-bedroom (53%) and 3-bedroom (7%). Just over 60% are dual aspect.
- The proposed building heights range from 4-5 storeys on Main Street to a mix of 8-9 storeys and 11 storeys bordering the bypass, with one 16 storey block facing Sweetmount Park.
- There will be 338 car parking spaces for residents (a ration of 0.4 to each unit, or parking for 40% of the apartments) and 56 others, which may include

staff parking etc. There are parking spaces for just over 1,600 bicycles.

- A public open space is proposed behind Holy Cross church.
- Access for vehicles is proposed to be from the Dundrum bypass only, not from Main Street. A new pedestrian only bridge over the bypass is envisaged.
- The proposals as they stand envisage the demolition of all buildings on the West side of Main Street which are owned by Hammerson-Allianz¹, except the 3 houses of Glenville Terrace.

What does An Bord Pleanála's Opinion say about the proposals?

In its summary, An Bord Pleanála says clearly that the proposals submitted will “require further consideration and amendment to constitute a reasonable basis for an application for strategic housing development”.

An Bord Pleanála's main comments and observations are summarised as follows:

This primarily residential development, situated in a central location in Dundrum, is **not appropriate for Dundrum's zoning status as a “Major Town Centre”** within the County, which necessitates a “greater degree of mixed use”, and provision of “entertainment, leisure, cultural and civic uses”, as stipulated in the *DLR County Development Plan (Special Local Objective 149)*. As it stands, the proposed development seems

¹ The buildings on “Campbell's Corner and immediately around the crossroads are excluded because this has been designated an Architectural Conservation Area by the County Council. The main buildings not owned by Hammerson-Allianz on the west side of Main Street are Mulvey's Pharmacy and Lisneys Estate Agents.

unlikely to add to the “vitality and viability” of the Village area as a whole.

- o The proposed heights and “massing” of buildings raise issues, and An Bord Pleanála is seeking justification for the developer’s strategy, which pays insufficient attention to **integration with the existing and predominantly 2-storey environment of Main Street**. In addition, An Bord Pleanála urges the developer to “further consider” the planning requirement for respecting the character of Main Street (this refers to the *DLR County Development Plan, Special Local Objective 150*).
- o It raises questions about the **appearance of the whole “highly visible” development when viewed from a distance**, and its impact on existing residential properties close by.
- o An Bord Pleanála expresses concern about overall design, especially **the visual impact of the building materials, finishes and landscaping** proposed, and queries how well they will contribute to an “inclusive people-friendly neighbourhood”.
- o An Bord Pleanála suggests the proposals require further consideration of the **quality of the “residential amenity”** of the whole development, referring to the current official design standards for apartments as they relate to single aspect and north-facing apartments. In particular, there may be **issues of light and shade**, especially in the “communal open spaces” within the development.
- o There are questions about the main proposed **public open space**, which is to be situated behind Holy Cross church - including its smallish size, its location, problems with disabled access and

possibly overshadowing by surrounding buildings. They also comment on the lack of adequate “passive surveillance” from neighbouring buildings.

- o Proposals for **other open spaces** on the site as a whole raise further concerns. If public, these need to be “meaningful”, and if communal (for the use of residents only) there are questions about the proposed close proximity of the blocks to each other, and resulting overshadowing/ lack of light.
- o An Bord Pleanála lists a number of serious outstanding concerns which must be addressed, relating to **water and waste water management and flood risk**.
- o Questions are raised about the permeability of the site, its connectivity and **how well it links with all the elements in the immediate built environment**, especially the new shopping centre (the “Dundrum Town Centre”), Main Street, the bypass and Sweetmount Park.

What are Imagine Dundrum’s views and proposals on all of this?

Imagine Dundrum welcomes a regeneration of the Village, and is by no means opposed to development as such, but has consistently argued for development which will be in keeping with Dundrum’s historical character and its Village streetscape, and which is appropriate to its status as the second major town in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County. This is what the local community have told us over the last five or six years of talking and listening together.

In our view, a priority requirement for any new development is that it will contribute strongly to the revitalisation of the Village itself, and to the building of the future Dundrum community. You

can find more of Imagine Dundrum's thinking in our August 2021 document, *The Regeneration of the old Shopping Centre site and the west side of Dundrum Village: Proposals from Imagine Dundrum*.

In a second article, we will outline our views on many of the specific elements of the Hammerson-Allianz Proposals as outlined above, and raise some other important issues for discussion.