

FAQs on Hammerson-Allianz Development Proposals for Dundrum Village

At the Imagine Dundrum webinar on planning issues and the future of Dundrum village in late November 2021, so many questions were put to the panel that not all could be answered there and then. Here are answers to most of them, grouped into the main topics raised. They are particularly relevant now that An Bord Pleanála's Opinion and Inspector's Report on the Hammerson-Allianz proposals were published in January 2022.

+ Community consultation and representation – how do we have our say?

Q: How do all of us as citizens demand a say in how the places we live in are designed?

A: There are a number of things citizens can do:

- Engage in public consultations with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council or Government, especially those concerning development plans and regulations.
- Send a response to planning applications.
- Contact your local County Councillor or TD with your views when a planning proposal becomes public.

Q: Will it not take a massive public campaign based on the Imagine Dundrum proposals to save us from oblivion?

A: When the plans for the Hammerson-Allianz development in Dundrum are submitted, a large public response using the 2021 Imagine Dundrum Proposals (see website) as a guide will be important, and the more observations/ objections, the better. Even if your planning observations are similar to Imagine Dundrum's vision of Dundrum, it is still worth making your individual observations. In fact it is very important that you do!

Q: How can citizens demand accountability from politicians and planners?

A: Citizens can raise their concerns by engaging with public representatives, and if enough voters raise issues they are more likely to pay attention, as they need your votes to stay in power.

Q: When the planning application is published by An Bord Pleanála (ABP), how will Imagine Dundrum and the local community be able to voice our opinions as part of the Part 10 process?

- The main way of raising your voice is to submit to ABP a response (titled "an observation") to the developer's published plans.
- Also you are requested to encourage others to send observations responding to these plans.

Q: In London major projects are required to undertake meaningful consultation. Could this be done in the Irish planning context?

A: This is not a requirement at the moment, but it should be! As stated in the question, it is a requirement in the UK. An overhaul of the Irish planning system is needed to broaden the consultation process and make it more meaningful.

Q: Are we simply depending on the goodwill of the developer to meet the criteria set out by Imagine Dundrum?

A: Yes, to a degree. Hammerson did engage with Imagine Dundrum from an early stage, when we found them receptive to our ideas. At that stage, they were very clear in stating that they would undertake community engagement before submitting final plans for Dundrum Village. We were invited to see their plans for Ashgrove Terrace (now Donnybrook Fair) in early 2018, before these were submitted for planning permission. However, more recently they have not been willing to engage with Imagine Dundrum in any depth, although we had contact in relation to the dilapidation of buildings on Main Street owned by Hammerson.

After the press announcement* in November 2021 of 889 residential units on the Old Shopping Centre site, Imagine Dundrum is waiting for a response from Hammerson to our enquiry about the promised community engagement.

*RTE report of 14/10/21: <https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2021/1014/1253796-hammerson-plan-to-build-889-apartments-in-dundrum/>

Q: What are local TDs doing to represent the views of Dundrum in the face of this scheme?

A: All three TDs have been very receptive to Imagine Dundrum's ideas about the redevelopment overall and our position on how best to redevelop Main Street, and they have all stated their support for a Civic Centre for Dundrum. Individual citizens should ensure their TDs know their views and concerns about the Hammerson-Allianz proposals when these are made public.

Q: Were there any public representatives in the audience for the webinar?

A: Yes, a number of public representatives took part, as they did at Imagine Dundrum's previous webinar. We have had good support from the beginning of our campaign in 2016 from County Councillors and TDs, with many attending our in-person public events.

+ Planning processes and the proposed development

Q: Have plans been submitted to An Bord Pleanála yet? What is the proposed height?

A: At this stage, no plans have been lodged. However, the developer (Hammerson-Allianz) has now completed in early 2022 the pre-application process with the County Council and An Bord Pleanála, as required under the Strategic Housing Development (SHD) process. At this initial stage, proposals are discussed, but final plans will only be presented at the second stage, when the formal application for planning permission is made.

An "Opinion" was issued by An Bord Pleanála on January 14th, 2022. The developer has 16 weeks from that date, (i.e. the first week in May) to submit their plans in full. They may, of course, submit their plans earlier. The public then has 5 weeks to review the plans and make observations as appropriate.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/construction/dundrum-apartment-plans-need-more-consideration-appeals-board-1.4780707>

.../

Q: Is this development a Build-to-Rent scheme? – these schemes lead to more transient tenants who may not be as invested in the community.

A: Again, it is too early for this information to be available.

Q: Is it possible to view a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application before it is lodged at An Bord Pleanála?

A: No, it isn't possible to view the application before it is lodged. However, you can see ABP's Opinion of the Hammerson-Allianz proposals on the Imagine Dundrum website www.imaginedundrum.ie As noted above, there will be a public consultation period of 5 weeks from the date of lodgement, in which individuals (and local groups) can view the full planning application and send in their comments/ observations to An Bord Pleanála.

Q: When do you anticipate building starting? Have current tenants been given notice?

A: This will not be known for some time, and not until the planning application is approved, if approved, by ABP. An Bord Pleanála has 16 weeks after receiving the planning application to reach a decision. Only at that final stage – if the decision is favourable - will there be an indication of a start date for construction.

Imagine Dundrum has no information (other than anecdotal) about the various tenants' leases. Some buildings are unoccupied, and some we know are on very short leases.

+ Impact of the proposed development on Dundrum Village

Q: What parts of the village will be impacted? Is it only the Old Shopping Centre site or could they develop some of the other properties on Main St?

A: Hammerson-Allianz already owns the majority of the buildings on the West side of Main Street (excluding Campbells Shoes, Holy Cross Church and priest's house, Lisneys and Mulveys Pharmacy) as well as the Old Shopping Centre site. They also own the Waldemar Terrace quadrangle, Usher House and a few buildings on the East side. Their holdings give them a site of around 8.5 acres (3.45 hectares) on which to build.

Q: How can the developer assume Sweetmount Park will now become part of the development? The park was divided to accommodate the Town Centre. Now the rest of the green area is under threat.

A: As no plans have been submitted and made public, we cannot assume anything about the developer's hopes or intentions here. However, if Hammerson-Allianz plans involve the park/ green area, they will have to negotiate that with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

+ Traffic and pedestrian infrastructure

Q: There should be walking and cycling access to the new Main street from the west by a bridge so that it is not cut off by the bypass. Can this be a requirement?

A: Lots of locals remember the footbridge across the bypass, which served exactly this purpose. Building a new one would almost certainly be the Council's responsibility, because it would be a link to public land, on the Sweetmount side at least. Imagine Dundrum is not aware of any proposal for a

bridge in the Council's Local Area Plan for Dundrum (which we've been waiting for since 2018!), and there's no mention of it in the forthcoming *County Development Plan 2022-28*.

Q: Is there a separate traffic plan as Dundrum at stress times, e.g. at Christmas is strangled?

A: This has not happened to date, but traffic planning and management is a matter for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. You can write to your local Councillors or contact the relevant Council officials (details on how to report a problem are on the Council website www.dlrcco.ie).

Q: Based on the projected volume increase in residents, is there a review of infrastructure requirements to support this increase? Dundrum high street/bypass already a bottleneck.

A: The issue of traffic flows will be important when Hammerson-Allianz's final plans are considered by An Bord Pleanála, and an analysis of the impact of a new development on local traffic is normally a requirement at the submission stage. However, this is also something residents can comment on in the 5-week public consultation period after the submission and publication of final plans.

Q: Are there any ideas around additional traffic this new build will add to the area?

A: There are no specific ideas in the public domain, as far as Imagine Dundrum knows. But the forthcoming Dún Laoghaire Rathdown *County Development Plan 2022-28* has a lot to say about reducing motor traffic overall (see Ch. 5, "Transport and Mobility"). We expect the new County Development Plan to be in place by April..1

Q: The current infrastructure doesn't cater for current density, so what plans have DLRCC to upgrade to facilitate this new proposal?

A: See the draft *County Development Plan 2022-28* Ch. 5 again on policies and strategies for changing how people move around, which aim to reduce our dependence on private motor transport. And there is likely to be less commuting in the new hybrid working patterns of the future.

On infrastructure generally, Ch. 10 of the draft new *County Development Plan* looks at water, waste water, waste, pollution, and telecommunications— so there is a good deal of forward thinking there for the whole County, which can guide local development.

+ The developer: Hammerson-Allianz

Q: Did Hammerson attend this Imagine Dundrum webinar?

A: Yes, a representative from Hammerson attended the webinar.

Q: When was the most recent interaction with Hammerson? What was the tone?

A: As all our engagement since the outset has been with Hammerson only, Imagine Dundrum wrote to Hammerson by email on December 16th, reminding the company of the firm commitment given to us previously that there would be local community engagement before a Planning Application was lodged. We asked specifically if the company had closed the door on community engagement, apart from the statutory consultation once their application for planning permission has been made. In a brief response, the company representative assured us that they would be in contact in the New Year. We haven't heard anything as of mid-February 2022. We wrote for the first time to Allianz in December 2021 but received no reply.

Q: Do we know which architects have been engaged by Hammerson-Allianz?

A: At the time of writing, this information has not been made public.

+ “Low rise, high density” housing (presentation by architect John Dobbin)

Several people raised questions about the type of housing John Dobbin was promoting in his webinar presentation. Some answers can be found in a recent article of his on achieving high housing density and a more humane urban environment by this means, as compared to building conventional high-rise blocks:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/would-you-like-resolve-housing-crisis-here-how-we-can-john-dobbin/?trackingId=AwchtjNnQDiBUjbm3LhYQ%3D%3D>

Imagine Dundrum website: www.imaginedundrum.ie

Email: imaginedundrum2016@gmail.com