

Positive Public Response to Imagine Dundrum's Webinar:

A Changing Dundrum Village

Well over 250 people attended Imagine Dundrum's webinar in November, sparked by the announcement from Hammerson, the developer for the old Shopping Centre site, of their pre-planning consultations with An Bord Pleanála on a proposal for 889 apartments on the site.

Among those attending were Minister Catherine Martin TD, Minister Josepha Madigan TD, and Neale Richmond TD, several local Councillors, and many local community representatives and members of residents' associations. The Chair was Professor Alan Mee of the UCD School of Architecture.

An anti-democratic planning process

Robin Mandal, former President of the Royal Irish Institute of Architects and founder of the Dublin Democratic Planning Alliance (DDPA), outlined the challenges for local communities faced with proposed large-scale housing developments under the Strategic Housing Development (SHD) process. This anti-democratic system, he argued, frequently leads to poor quality developments affecting both current and future generations, and it is time for change.

A "low rise - high density" solution to the housing crisis

John Dobbin, Architect and Director in Shay Cleary Architects, outlined a solution to the housing crisis, which should be seriously considered by Irish developers, Government and local authorities as well as local communities. Good quality neighbourhoods can be developed which accommodate high density but in a low rise setting. Referencing Dublin's traditional housing forms in the streets of Rathmines and Phibsboro, and showing examples of current UK housing practice, he showed that compared to conventional high-rise blocks, "low rise – high density" housing is preferred by residents and can be just as profitable for developers.

A community response to Hammerson's forthcoming plans

Anne Colgan, Chair of Imagine Dundrum, asked participants to pay close attention to the plans for Dundrum Village when Hammerson seeks full planning permission from An Bord Pleanála, possibly early in 2022.

Imagine Dundrum intends to bring the local community together again once the plans are in the public domain. But she hoped that Hammerson would respond to a request for a meeting, and would offer further public consultation at this stage of the process.

Imagine Dundrum has drawn up its own proposals for the redevelopment of the Village, based on extensive local consultation, and set out in a recent document sent to Hammerson and all local representatives (available on the website).

Finally, she underlined Imagine Dundrum's strong expectation of the long-awaited and essential investment in Dundrum, to achieve the creation of *"a sustainable, modern, thriving Dundrum that blends the Village's rich past and heritage, its unique character and its present strengths, with its future as a modern urban village"*.

Many questions!

Participants contributed over 60 questions and observations to a lively and informative discussion which demonstrated the high level of public awareness and concern. There will be further responses on the website www.imaginedundrum.ie, where the recording of the webinar is available, along with the Imagine Dundrum proposals for the future of Dundrum Village.