

Highfield Park & Westbrook Road Residents' Association

To: The Land Development Agency and their professional team.

Re: Dundrum Central Proposed Development

7th February 2021

Dear Sir Madam,

We, the undersigned represent the committee of the Residents' Association of Highfield Park and Westbrook Road.

Firstly, we thank you for the ongoing constructive engagement evidenced to date and the information provided has assisted us in understanding the overall outline of the proposals, whilst obviously raises many detail questions.

In order to engage as constructively as possible with the project we have itemized our principle concerns in an approximate order of priority and have also identified items which we consider will directly affect our estate and the wider area.

We are conscious that you will receive many submissions so we have endeavoured to be as succinct as possible, and are issuing this letter as an aid to setting an efficient agenda in these distant times.

General

We strongly support the development in the principles of developing the site for residential and community use as proposed. We list our main concerns as identified to date in response to the initial schematic design.

1. Impact of traffic and access design at junction of Dundrum Road/Highfield Park/St Columbanus Road

One of the main concerns is the increased traffic and disruption along Dundrum Road. The issues are related but are listed as follows:

- a. Traffic volume of new development at the Dundrum Central site.
- b. Access and egress from the Dundrum Central site and impact on entrances to the roads opposite which are already difficult junctions to access.
- c. Pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.
- d. Considerations around possible road widening to facilitate right-hand turning into the Dundrum Central site and Highfield Park.
- e. Clarification of second entrance possibility.

In relation to 'd'. above we are of the general opinion that the boundary high wall is desirable to be removed to open up the site and integrate it into the area, and to allow parkland and retention of existing trees to be the initial design feature facing Dundrum Road with the new buildings set back into the main body of land.

2. Impact of construction traffic for a lengthy period

This can be addressed by developing site entrance/road widening and approach works in the first enabling works phase, including the landscaping as far as possible. This will help alleviate concerns around congestion on Dundrum Road.

Active measures have to be in place to prevent construction traffic overspill daily into the estates surrounding the development.

3. Public Park and Permeability

One of the most appealing possibilities of the project is the opportunity to provide a public park, with public facilities such as playground/skating etc and we strongly support this aspect of the design.

In tandem with this is the permeability across the site which will encourage integration. We are encouraged by the initial suggestions of this and support this measure.

4. Car parking provision provided for in the design

We are concerned at the suggested proposal to provide only 1:3 ratio of parking to residential units. This is symptomatic of current trends in planning policies but we consider it unrealistic and faulty for the following reasons:

- Long term overspill into surrounding estates will occur as the future residents vote with their feet on car ownership.
- The ratio is evidence of limiting the future design to a 'build-to rent' model of occupancy which will not contribute at all to the integration of the new development into an established community (see paragraph 6.ii below also).

5. Community Facilities

We strongly support the inclusion of community facilities and perhaps a park café to encourage public integration. These may include gyms etc of any viable model.

6. Issues of concern for the wider community integration

(i) Public transport integration.

Liaise with public transport providers to improve bus routes direct to city (these have been downgraded and there is limited regular service direct to city via Milltown).

Clarify how the Luas will cater for ever increasing traffic volumes.

Clarify how the scheme will integrate with cohesive cycle lane facilities and in particular how the scheme will integrate with the overall DLRCoco future traffic management plans.

(ii) Residential dwelling types.

There is ongoing tension across Dublin about the imposition of large-scale but small-size Build-to Rent apartment schemes wedged into existing suburban communities.

We are more than aware of the need to increase densities and utilize available land but given the flagship location and nature of this site we strongly consider that there is a higher calling required of the LDA at this site.

Our particular concerns are that there is a need to avoid any mass' Build-to Rent' dwelling model in favour of ownership as far as possible.

We submit that there should be home ownership options via a mix of private, and social affordable schemes available for long-term occupancy and ownership.

Many residents of the wider area have families growing out of the home as young adults and an ownership model for them or older downsizers and the wider community is vital.

This issue is related to the car parking ratio as 'build-to-rent' has no applicable standards. We consider that the standards set by the Council of one space per dwelling should be met in support of long-term ownership options.

(iii) Building height.

There is a strong concern that proposed heights will be out of scale completely with the area.

We submit there are fine examples of medium height developments in the area - for example Marianella on Orwell Road and Mount St Anne's Milltown both in Dublin 6.

Such developments allow for a sustainable mix of building types and reasonable heights and can achieve good density and a viable social mix.

Individual 'towers' will be more disruptive and out of sync with the neighbourhood, and may not be economic, or induce ever increasing rents to justify their existence.

Direct effects of 'towers' such as shadow and overbearing will of course be of more concern to the direct neighbours.

In summary we consider a general height of 6 storeys approximately to be the general sustainable height.

We trust the above is satisfactory and look forward to the detail design presentation.

Highfield Park & Westbrook Road Residents' Association

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